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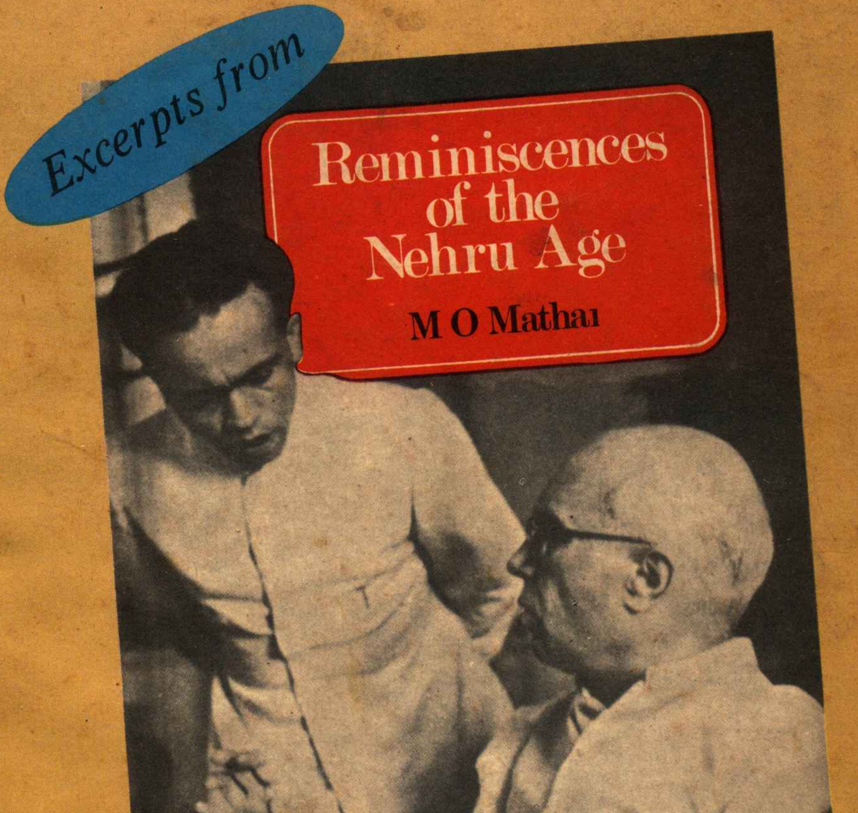

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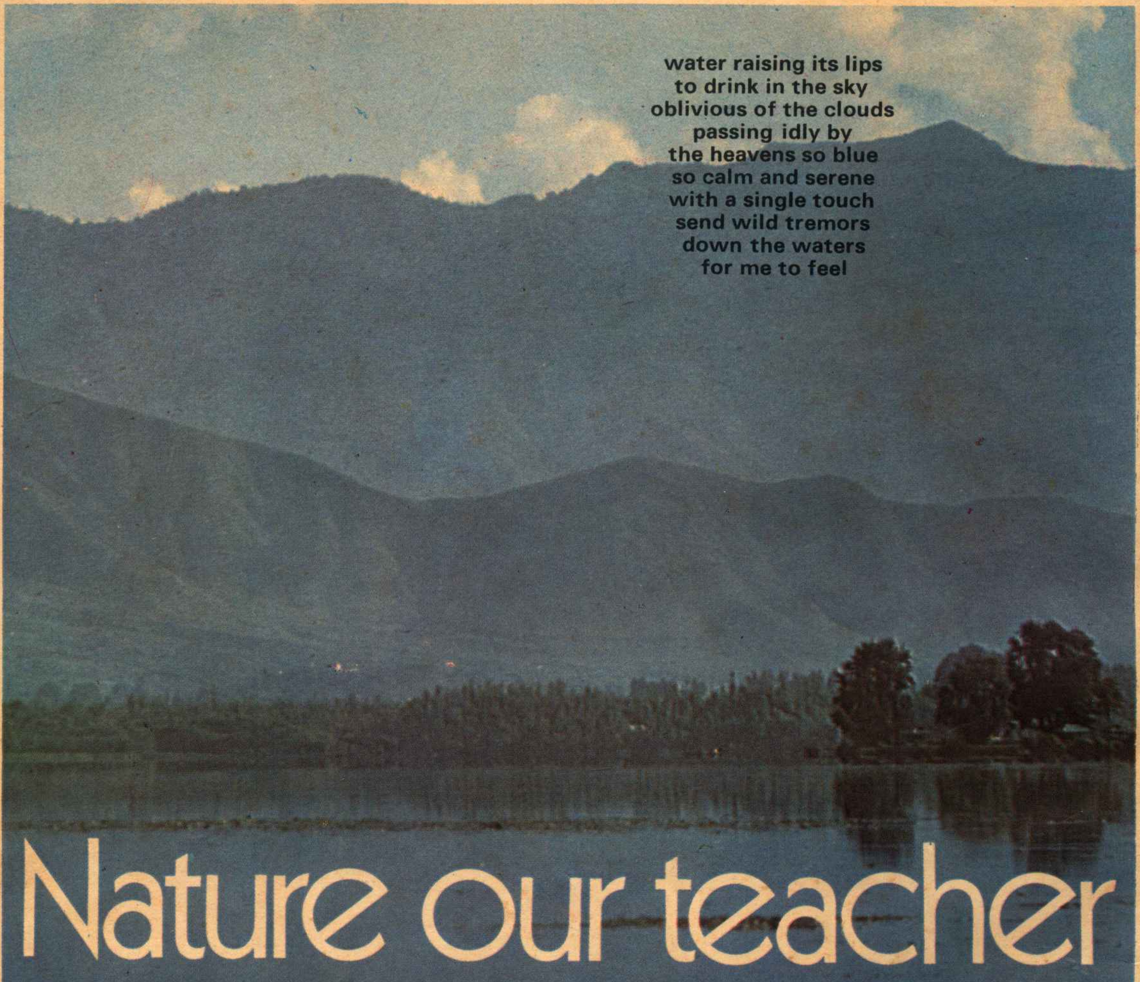
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ADVERTISING SALES OFFICES
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N. Das
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K.S. Ramachandra
528, 8th Block, Jayanagar,
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inside

"New Delhi Notings" capture the year in retrospect. The piece, by an 'Observer' in the national capital, makes interesting reading.

*

Hemalkasa, a little village in central India, has become a centre for development. It caters to both material and abstract change, and yet, attempts to preserve the traditions and charm of tribal life. . . **Hemalkasa Awakens** by Shobha Mane tells the story.

*

An encounter with a hippie girl, high in the Himalayas, ends in an unexpected manner–**Cousin Shiv and the Flower Child,** fiction by Margaret Bhatty.

*

Uday Shankar, a previously unpublished interview by his close friend and associate, Mohan Khokar–the only first-hand archival material left to posterity on the great dancer's mind.

*

Sathya Saran wonders what it is that makes a woman deny herself the joys of motherhood and the fulfilment of being a wife, for a lonely life of prayer and penance? Her search for the answers, in the absorbing article **Of Divine Bondage,** ends in more questions.

*

Dear and Glorious Friend–an evaluation of Franz Liszt, the man and his music, by E. Das Ernest.

*

The swinging astrologer, Bejan Daruwalla is at it again with a forecast for 1978–and surprises for everyone!

*

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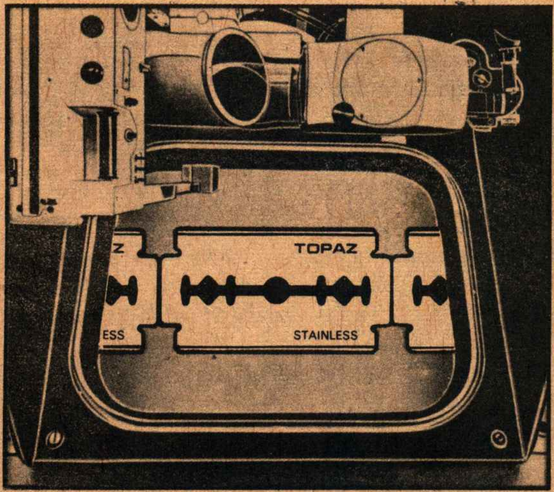

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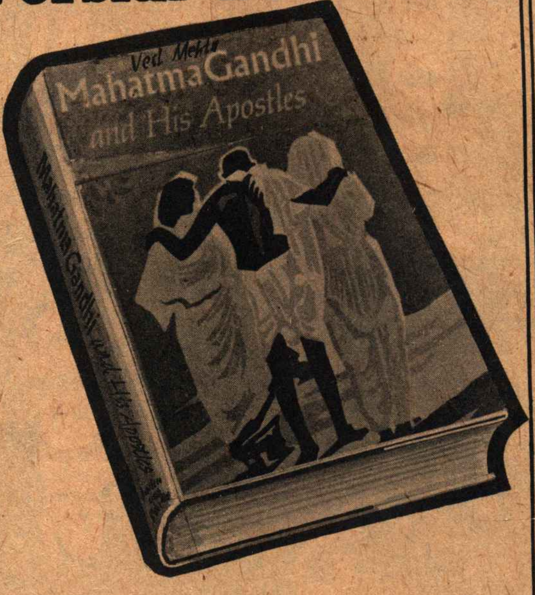

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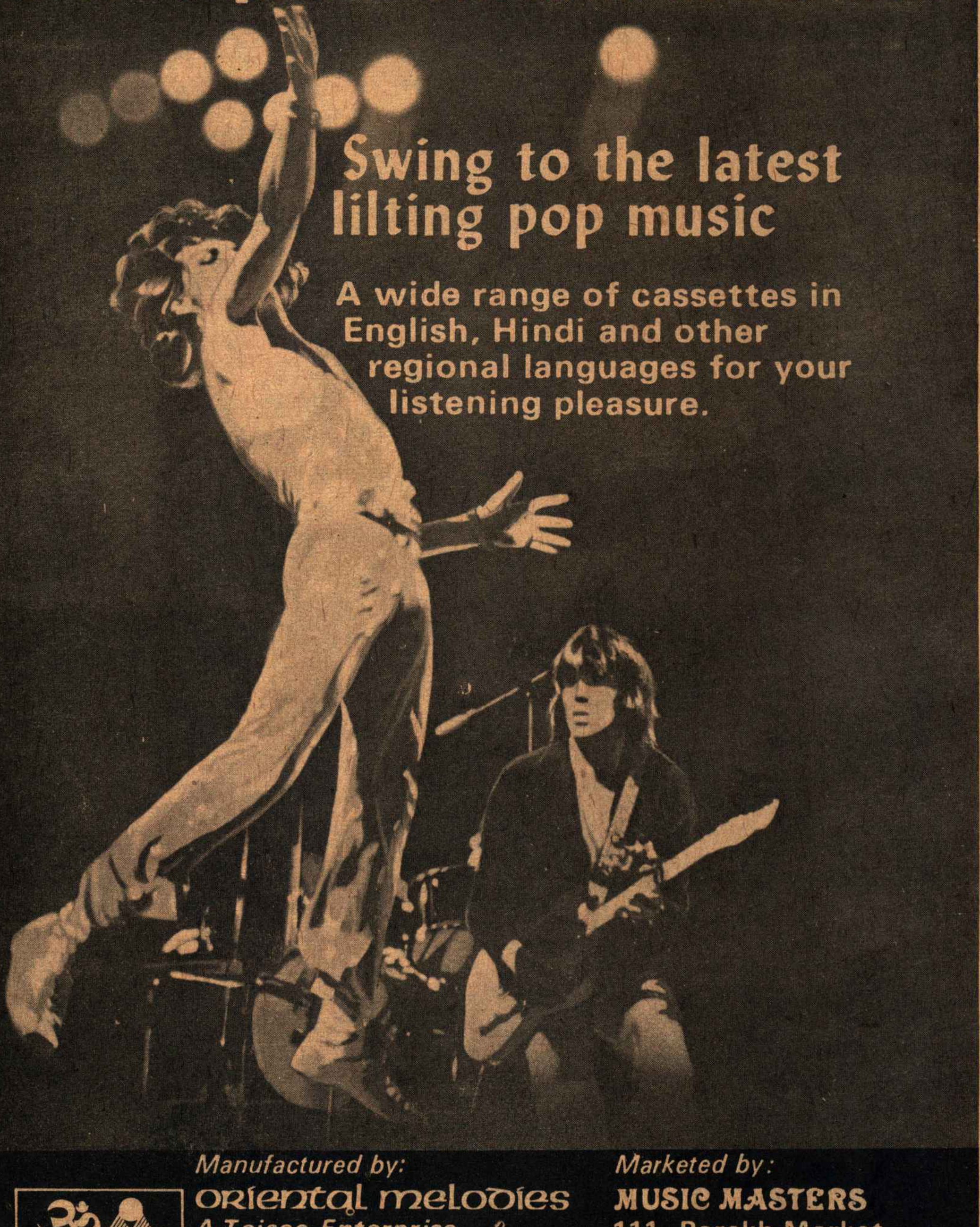

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NEW DELHI NOTINGS

The Year That Was

By 'Observer'

THE Delhiite with a vested interest in the capital often speaks of the "soul" of the city, the splendour of its Moghul past and its "vibrant" culture. Hogwash. The city is singularly soulless, the Moghul past was buried long before the time capsule and any culture is non-existent. It is a city full of hypocrisy. It is also unclean, the antiseptic look of Lutyen's Kingsway complex notwithstanding. The inhabitants are either the colourless government *babus* or the callous business class, one as cold towards the other as December in Delhi. The student community are two-faced, by and large. They pretend to read Sartre, Che Guevera and Regis Debray in public but pore over Star Dust and Debonair in private. They talk of Satyajit Ray's movies but secretly admire Dharmendra's luck or Hema Malini's looks. Their English is often spoken with a phoney accent, betrayed by a few '*ki*' and '*mane*', uttered compulsively.

1977 opened with a bang for the *Delhiwala.* Each one had voted Janata thinking the other would anyway vote Congress and when the results were known, each was confounded by his own power of destruction. In the euphoria that followed Emergency became a dirty word and everyone reminded himself or herself that he or she had gone through a "nightmare" and was the proud (and unwitting) architect of a new nation. And the sharp ones who were sychopants in 1976 paraded as Emergency victims in 1977 with an eye on the loaves and fishes.

Like all euphoria, the emergency one too evaporated. Rising prices. Recalcitrant workers' unions. Immature student leaders. Unsatisfactory transport, electricity and water services. Heartless hospital staff. Alarming rise in crime. And so on. A Minister blamed Mrs. Gandhi for malaria. No one was amused. Because the wretched guy was shivering in bed bitten by the anopheles. Prestige Universities–Jawaharlal Nehru and Delhi–being strike-bound was no laughing matter, however much an obliging press tried to underplay it. Floods and civic discomforts were too grim to be detracted by the sensation provided by the Shah Commission.

On the other hand, the conspicuous consumers are having a field day. Like the great display of gold and silver by the Greater Kailash folks, the unfriendly attitude of the Friends Colony guys or the offensive habits of the Defence Colony chaps. The helmeted guys on two wheelers (often the whole unplanned family of five on two pitiable wheels) narrowly miss being knocked down by one solitary person at the wheel of a swanky Cadillac clipping at 100 km, on a road inappropriately named Vinay Marg. Arrogant auto-rickshaw drivers refuse to carry old folks and children and passing by motorists slow down, not to offer a ride but to cast a dirty glance at the *paidalwala* for daring to step on the highway.

So it's a mood of despondency as we slip into the new year. The Agri Expo hoardings have started fading. The proliferating jokes on the PM's drink fail to evoke the same chuckle. Even the 77 has turned out to be the silly syrupy drink that it is.

Carter and Callaghan will hold the capital dweller's momentary attention. Some *tamasha* perhaps. What next? Rising prices, closed colleges, appalling crimes, trying transport, filthy hospitals, mosquitoes, malaria? The bad days again?

Perhaps the experienced *Dilliwasi* will tell himself that he should remember to describe all this a 'nightmare' some day, if necessity arises. Is it that all wheels must turn a full circle, even the unoiled, creaking ones seen on Delhi roads? Or is it that things have always to get a little worse before they get better?

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Hemalkasa may be just another tribal village in the geography of India but it has become a pinpoint of development—development in the true sense of being integrated. For it caters to both material and abstract change and yet attempts to preserve the beauty, joy and truth of tribal life. . .

HEMALKASA AWAKENS

Text and photos by Shobha Mane

FOUR YEARS AGO when Baba Amte set up camp in a leaf-thatched hut beside a mountain track in the depths of central India,* it all seemed like a fantasy. Like Winifred Coates making the Sahara drink so it would smile with abundant greenery. Like the Japanese building the world's longest underground tunnel in the Tsugaru Straits.

But fantasies have a disarming way of turning into pleasant reality. Baba Amte's "The People's Brotherhood Project for Self Development" (Lok Biradari Prakalp) is just another such work. Till last year, despite the impact made in the area, Baba Amte had often felt that the onslaughts of merciless Nature were far beyond the endurance capacity of his people. It would be better if the project were given up, especially since his son Prakash's health was steadily deteriorating from liver trouble. But the Amtes are made of the Ulysses spirit. Having tasted life at its very dregs and emerged victorious time and again, their restless, dauntless spirits surge on. Today their project has become an agent of self-development compatible with tribal culture. Today there is no going back. Today there is only going ahead, deeper and deeper into the unknown wilderness of central India—working, struggling, winning—until life itself says, "Stop!"

It was a hot May morning as the bus moved towards Hemalkasa. The rivers, overflowing with spite during the monsoons, were now dry and transparent to their beds; the thick jungle stood half naked, the earth cracked and parched. Nature had not changed her ruthless life style in the past year. Why should she? Hadn't she been that way for aeons?

The project suddenly came into view. An orderliness struck the eye. The ad hoc nature of the previous year's camp was gone. Areas were demarcated and bamboo fences separated fields from residences. The foliage-roofed, bamboo-supported dormitories for patients were replaced by tile and brick structures. The surgical tent and outdoor bench-dispensary were not to be seen. They had moved into one of the three new living quarters completed last June. To the left of the entrance, beyond the fields, the plinth of the 16-bed hospital had grown into a completed building; final plastering was in progress and people worked from the crack of dawn to late sundown to utilise all possible daylight.

Change was indeed the hallmark of the People's Brotherhood Project. Yet here was change evident not just in its physical garb. Change had left its imprint wherever the project had touched—the physical environs, the hearts and minds of those for whom it existed. And, beyond these, overseas from where monies had come for the hospital.

In the past twelve months the work of the project had become very well-known among the

---

*_In the Interior of Central India_, Imprint, December 1976.

Manda at work in the clinic.

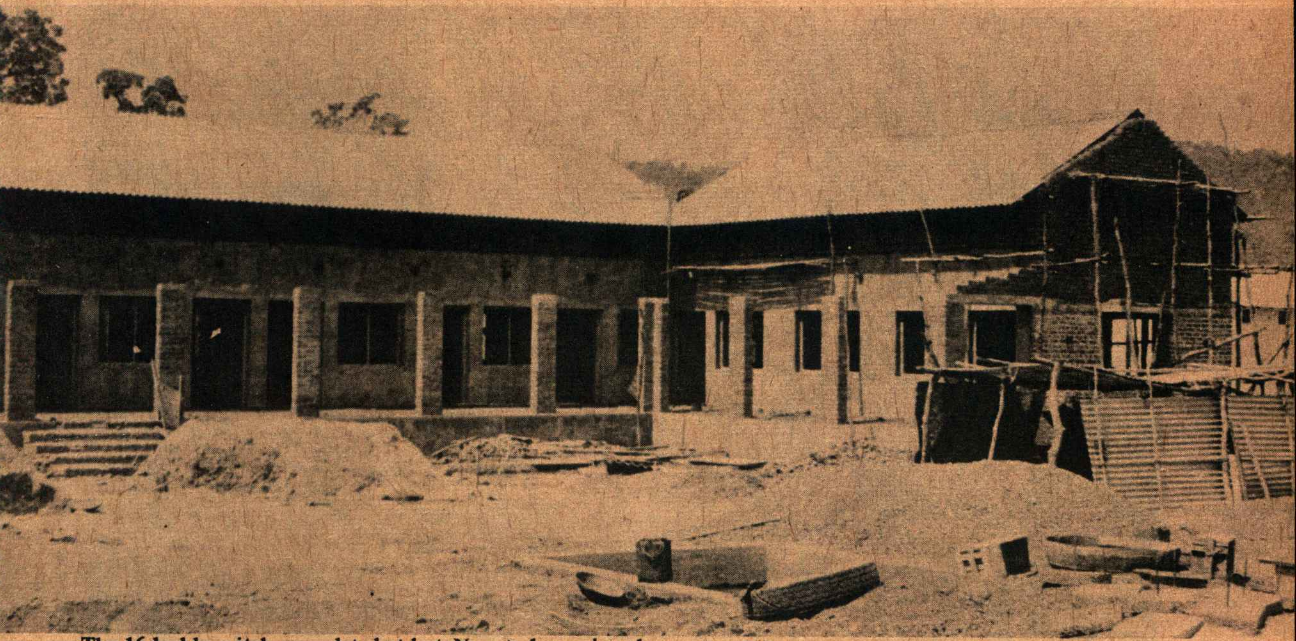
tribals of Bhamragarh and Bastar. Patients had come from far and near, in rain and shine, over dust-dry mountain trails and indifferently flowing rivers and streams. Back they had carried stories of health and healing, humaneness, love and concern; of land producing rich food where earlier nothing grew, of tribal children improving through education. With these stories were expressed a liking for organised work. Organised work brought fruit and fruit brought money. Work paid.

Madhiya tribals had learned to shed their fear of non-tribal people and even trust in the Project staff. They had seen the project staff systematically plough, care for and harvest their crops while the fruit of their own primitive method of shifting cultivation was at best a whim of nature's beneficence. They had known hunger and ill-health and the eating of anything that moved, like rats and crows, to satisfy that gnawing, hollow feeling of an empty stomach. Now they had learned that proper agricultural know-how was basic for their survival and once learned it would solve their most immediate and perennial problem of food.

But it was not just the fundamental economics of survival that fascinated the Madhiyas and Gonds of the area. The various projects undertaken by Prakash Amte and his team and the ideas disseminated through conversation revealed to the tribals that there was more to life than mere material change. Yes, they needed food, clothing and shelter. But more than these quantitative factors they needed abstract change, that is, a qualitative life which would ensure for them, their children and their tribe a better living beyond bare necessities. They realised they needed education.

Two years ago Bhamragarh's first school was started by young Mukund Dikshit at nearby Village Koinguda. Classes were held from 8-11 p.m. All sat together—the aged and the young—repeating the words Mukund recited in the open, his back turned to the lantern-lit blackboard. He taught in a mixture of Marathi and Hindi for he had not yet learned the tribal language. He struggled on, improvising techniques and methods that were easy to comprehend and retain.

Meanwhile news had gone round that the project was thinking of starting an ashram school. Enthusiastic parents, last June, came with their wards and left them in camp. "But



The 16 bed hospital—completed at last. Now to be equipped.

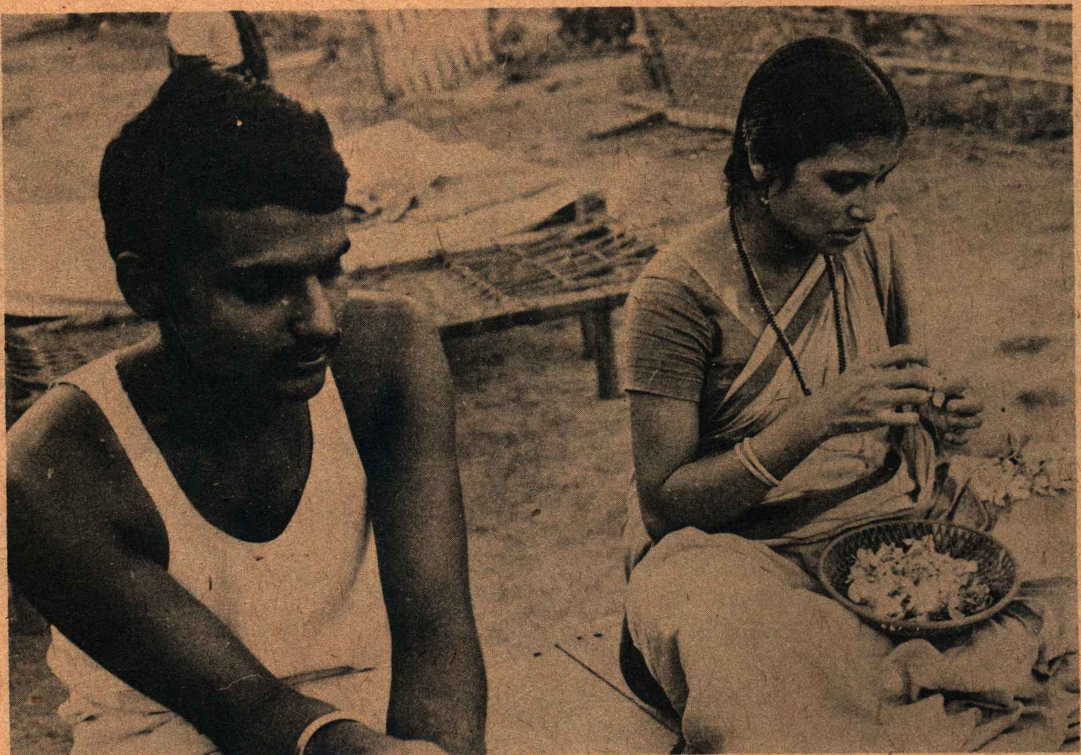
we are not ready to take them," said the workers. "We haven't stocked food and clothing for so many." "That's your problem," argued the tribals and left.

Thus forcibly began the first residential school of Bhamragarh. Mukund closed down the Koinguda school and became in-charge on site of the children. His assistant was a young college teacher, Gopal Phadnis, a new staff member of the Project. Together on horseback they combed the area to bring their muster roll to 25. But tribal parents in the interior were reluctant. Fear of their children being raped, exploited, kidnapped, given as human sacrifice as in the past when tribals responded to such atrocities, made recruitment difficult. Posu of Village Juviya, convinced of the Project's good intentions, was the first to send his son. Others followed immediately. And on June 10, 1976, the school went into operation with 25 pupils.

The morning instruction consisted of the prescribed Zilla Parishad course. Afternoons were given to practical education in the fields. The boys learned agricultural know-how such as Japanese rice culture, use of sprays, insecticides and fertilisers, watering of fields and vegetable cultivation. The production of one's own food led to new dietary habits. The boys learned to eat chappaties and new vegetables like greens, brinjals, cauliflower. At the same time they yearned for bamboo shoots, mahua flowers and roots and tubers of sundry sorts. These were provided to drive away their homesickness and lessen the incidence of uninformed escape from the site. Also to create a homely atmosphere there was dance, music, carpentry, interchange

A tribal drinking from a skillfully woven bamboo water container.

SHOBHA MANE



Prakash and Manda enjoy a quiet moment together in the evening.

of stories, question hour and outdoor activities.

"This blend of formal and informal education is an imperative," explained Mukund, "because no matter how much work we put in, our prime change agents are these children and the Project's thrust is to help the tribals help themselves."

WITHIN A FEW MONTHS at school the children had already begun to operate as effective change agents. On holidays they did two important things. Each child took home a packet of vegetable seeds for a kitchen garden. Once a month each child took home a classmate from the other tribe for a day or night. Gonds and Madhiyas do not intermix and never stay overnight at each other's from fear of black magic and shaven heads. With the intermixing promoted by the school, the initial resistance of the tribals gave way and their fears gradually dissipated.

Further, the idea of sharing was inculcated through a work camp. The boys were taken to village Tekli for a couple of days. The older boys built bunds for the villagers and all helped plant the seedlings they had taken as gifts for the village. The residents were amazed at what they saw—their own people in good clothes, healthy. And educated! We should also send our children to Guruji, they were heard saying off and on. At present there are 55 children in the school, of which 5 are girls. There are four classes. In addition to agricultural education, each child is taught the methods of growing and spinning cotton. This will help the tribals care for their second basic requirement—clothing.

To care for the school children there is a young Madhiya couple. This is the second on the site. The first—Chandra and Gomi—joined the Project last year.

Chandra and Gomi belong to Koinguda and are "watankars" or metal casters by profession, Chandra has mastered cooking and is Baba's interpreter when he goes into the interior. He speaks Marathi and proudly says, "My education is complete. I can read and write for signature purposes." Gomi does the washing, cleaning and filling of water.

One evening Chandra sat on a heap of sand behind the hospital playing the flute. He had learned it from Mukund. Beside him lay his beautifully sculpted brass horn. "We use dif-

Chandra and Gomi: The first tribal couple to participate fully in the project.

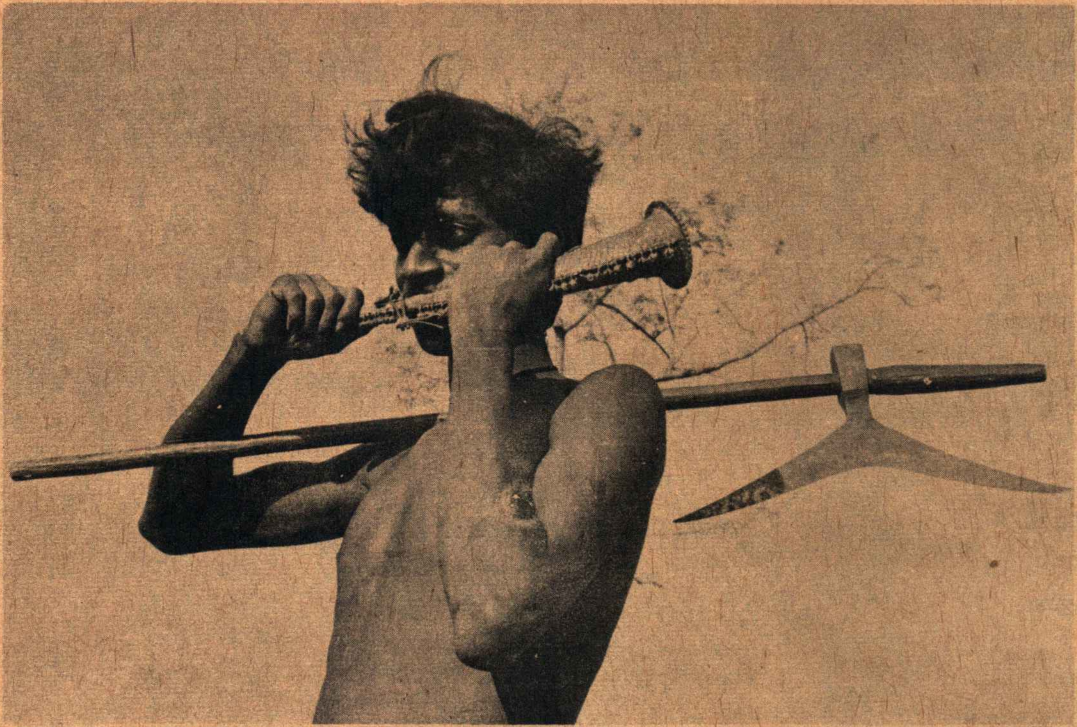
ferent calls to indicate different things," informed Chandra. "But the art of casting is gradually dying out. We don't have the metal. But Baba says he is going to get me some."

The Madhiyas are master craftsmen, taking their patterns directly from nature. Their women wear ear-rings shaped like graceful peepul leaves, their tobacco pouches are large cashewnuts cast in metal or wood. They are dexterously hollowed from the top and have screw covers. Such skilled work requires long and hard labour. "Yet," said one tribal visitor who had come to sell his art, "we are willing to make these things but where is the metal? If we have some money we can buy some metal at the market."

That was a sad confirmation of the state of tribal art. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan once said, "Civilization is not built of bricks and mortar but by men with clarity of mind and charity of heart." These basic tenets are applicable to the tribals. They have a civilisation all their own, sophisticated in its own way. But poverty has been the biggest bugbear of the Madhiyas. Now with a little money coming in through work with the Ballarpur paper mills, plucking and selling of tendu leaves, road work and the impact of the Project, an intra-cultural transition is in ferment. The Project is giving the tribals the basics for living–health and the know-how for food production.

This year new projects have been undertaken. The chief of these is the Extension Program at Lahiri, 40 miles from Hemalkasa across the swirling rivers of Paralkota and Pamalgautami. Bhojraj Kamble and his wife Prabha, both cured leprosy patients, have been put in charge. Their clinic has no equipment for they don't need it. Their main work is to diagnose the very common ailments and treat the sick with tablets and nursing. Within a few weeks of starting, 700 patients from the surrounding 30 villages with a 5,000 population visited the Kambles. Now they didn't need to come all the way to Manda and Prakash for simple complaints.

The idea of setting up a hut-camp at Lahiri was not just health-oriented. Eventually it is hoped that from among the villages five smart, intelligent workers will be trained at the hospital and sent to work as barefoot doctors on a pay packet given by the Project. Also as soon as an opportunity presents itself agricultural work will be undertaken. The project will work on a



Chandra—a tribal calling other tribals to join in his big adventure.

seed for seed basis—a method found very successful. Takers of the scheme have already been registered. It has been the Project's experience that when the tribals do not fail to reciprocate or repay a debt all their seed has been returned. In 1975, 10 quintals of distributed seed was recovered; in 1976, 20 quintals; and in 1977, 60 quintals are to be given.

Some of this seed is being used in the five villages adopted to serve as models. These villages are Koinguda, Bejur, Hemalkasa, Tekla and Kumarguda. One resident in each village has been chosen for practical agricultural demonstration. Fertilisers are being provided by the Project. The work is going on smoothly and successfully.

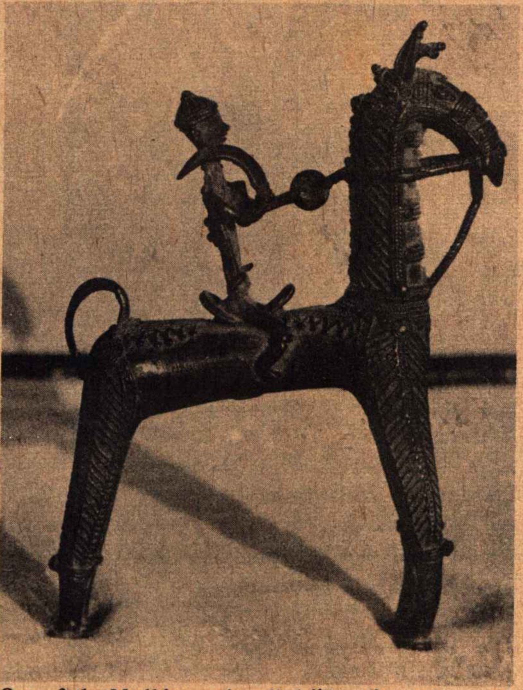
The basic aim of the Project is not to provide subsidy or to dole out charity. The idea is to promote self-development and help is given to develop a taste for self-development.

But there are resources that the tribals cannot procure. One of these is finance. The Project says that it will make provision for it. While the seed to seed scheme may be successful and tablets may be distributed free, injections have to be paid for. Baba Amte has made it possible for the first ever bank to start functioning in the area. He made available one of his houses to the Chandrapur District Cooperative Bank. I was present at the inauguration and was amazed to know that an amount of Rs.3,300 was deposited. Now at least the village moneylender will not pester the innocent tribal.

The Project is also going to open a shop for future curbing of exploitation. There are three small grocery stores in Hemalkasa village. But whether one buys for a day or for a year the price one pays is more than double.

But the Amtes say something more. While food and medicine may take care of the basics of tribal living—the bricks and mortar of a tribal civilization—there are whole areas which need preservation. Hence his effort to save the unrivalled craftsmanship of Chandra and his kind. the learning of the local languages.

Knowing the tribal flair for art, Baba took five boys from the school to Anandwan in Warora—the pivot of his five-pronged work—for a six week training at the arts and crafts centre—Sandhi Niketan. The boys learned skills like coir-matting, carpet weaving, caning. These they are teaching back to the new students at Hemalkasa. After completing their training at Sandhi Niketan the boys were taken to the Somnath



One of the Madhiya gods called "Penu" cast in metal and sculpted.

work camp. They were superior to their urban room-mates in their performance. On the closing night of the camp one of the boys expressed his indebtedness for the non-tribal experience. "A new world has been opened for us," he said.

Hemalkasa may be just another tribal village in the geography of India but it has become a pinpoint of development–development in the true sense of being integrated. For it caters to both material and abstract change and yet attempts to preserve the beauty, joy and truth of tribal life.

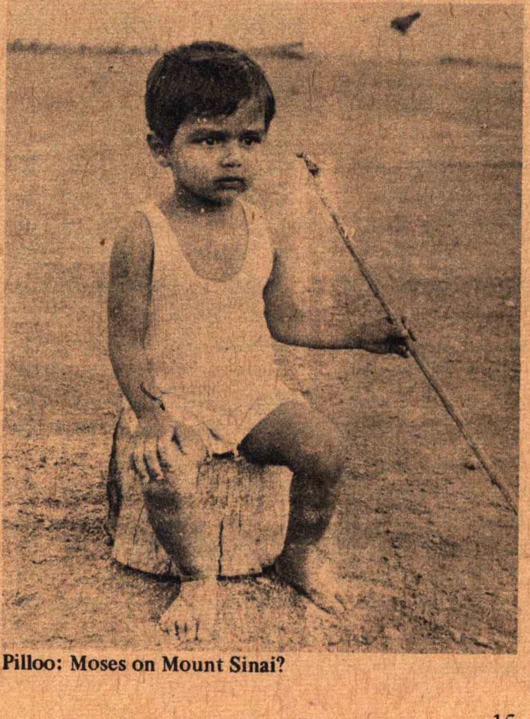
The people responsible for making such a formidable project successful are young. Baba Amte may well have been the inspirer and founder of it. But the project's day to day functioning is manned by 10 workers. First, there are Prakash and Manda, the Project's doctors. Then there are Renuka, Baba Amte's daughter, and her husband, Vilas Manohar. Renuka has been with the project since its inception. She speaks the language fluently and helps with nursing. Last year Vilas joined the project, first as a camper and then as a worker. He and Renuka decided to marry. The wedding was celebrated this February at Anandwan.

One of the problems of the young men working on the Project is finding partners who would be willing companions in the work of the Amtes. Few women are willing to risk the comforts of city life for the hardships of the wilderness. Vilas and Renuka's wedding solved the problems of two young dedicated workers. At the wedding ceremony Vilas' mother said that there was no need of performing "Kanya-daan" since she had made a "Putra-daan" to the project.

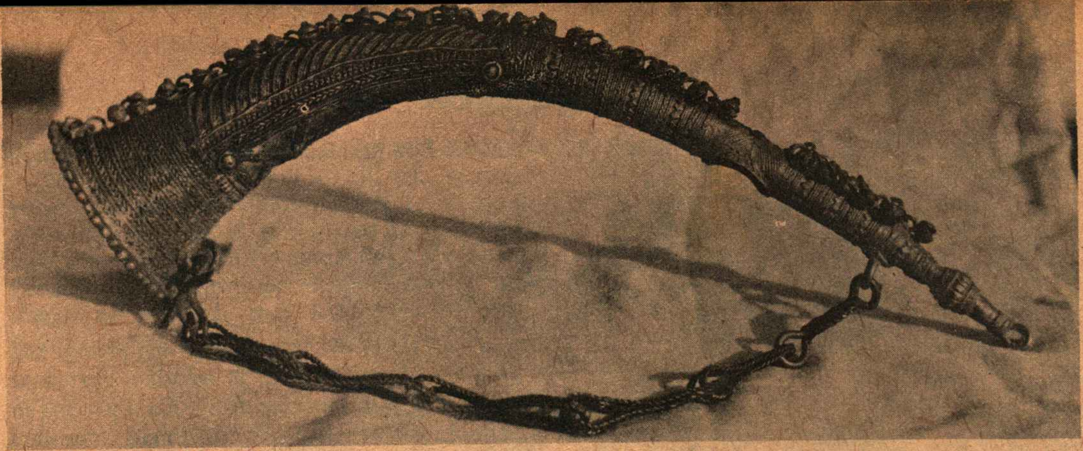
Panchal, who helps with dispensing and general administration, is another fortunate youth. He was speaking at a public meeting in Aurangabad early this year when a girl consented to be his wife. But the problem of companionship still exists for others.

THE INFLUX of young people into the project is growing. Shekhar of Bangalore came to Nagpur with the object of dedicating his life to Bhamragarh tribals. He gave up his lucrative business as a drug dealer. Baba Amte warned Shekhar of the rigors of life at Hemalkasa. Two years of trial would be necessary, perhaps ten. But Shekhar went on to Bhamragarh and is doing well.

Dr. Bhate and his wife joined the project last summer. He is a pathologist, having worked with the Gandhi Leprosy Foundation and the Armed Forces. When he gave up his recent private practice in Pune it was expressly with the thought that he and his wife would work permanently for the project. Mrs. Bhate is a



Pilloo: Moses on Mount Sinai?



Beautifully filigreed brass horn.

trained teacher. She helps with the school.

The Bhates have adjusted well to their new life. Dr. Bhate has a work room all to himself in the hospital. They are a quiet couple. This July, while the rains spat furiously, the Bhates walked the 45 miles to the base camp at Nagepalli, in order to get to Pune for a physical checkup.

Crossing those big rivers has no longer remained an insurmountable task for the project people. This August, while Manda was in a Nagpur hospital for her second child, Sadhanatai Amte took up the challenge of getting Prakash from Hemalkasa. The baby was only five and a half pounds. Tai took the project jeep and three workers with her. When they neared the river four of them walked into the water to find out where the jeep would hold its grip. Finding no suitable spot they travelled upstream. There they stood almost neck-deep in water at four different spots carefully directing the driver till he got across.

The challenges of nature have not in any way been mitigated. They continue in newer forms. Last summer, bees attacked some of the staff when they went picnicking on a hill. Then rabies broke out and there was no vaccine for there was no fridge for life-saving drugs. Vilas Manohar, on one of his trips to Pune in winter, found a kerosene-operated fridge for Rs.2,500. He had it repaired and donated it to the project. The hospital is still unequipped. Its seventeen rooms are bare. The Project will furnish all the equipment gradually, as funds permit. There is need for Operation theatre equipment, laboratories, labour room. Even the most elementary things like basins, lanterns, buckets, tin cans, bandages are needed in large quantities.

Prakash and his men, urban and tribal, have an abiding faith that everything will be available in proper time and that the Project is going to be successful.

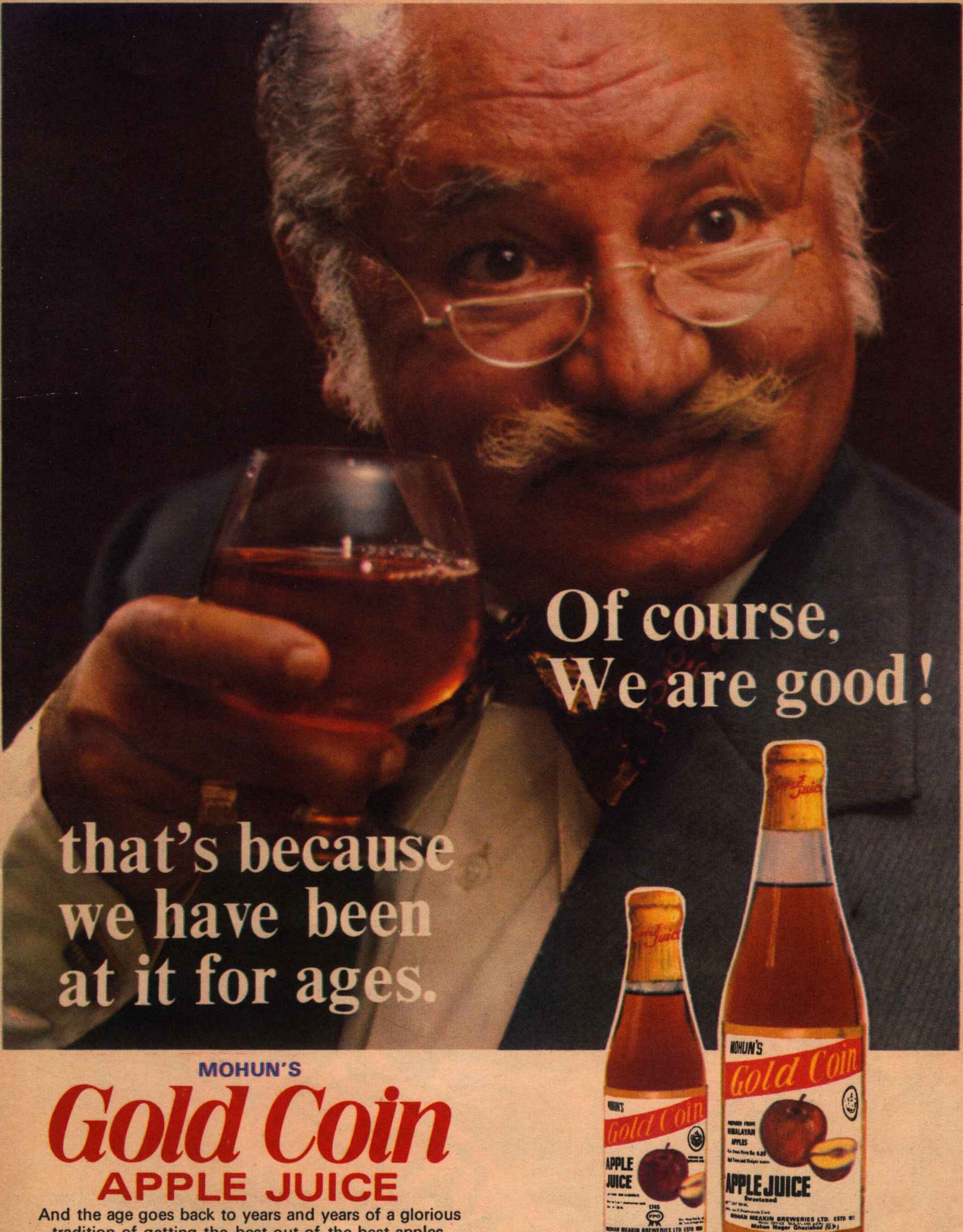
A couple of years ago there was an unuttered cry from the wilderness, a cry from the poverty-ridden, unhealthy tribals, which the Amtes and their workers heard. The same crying, shrinking tribal is a confident man now, working for his growth, smiling at the urban man at whom he once grit his teeth in suspicion and anger. For a light has at long last shone on him. And in that guiding light he can dream and hope for sound health, filled granaries, clothing, secure housing. He even envisions a time when he will have an extra penny to drop into the bank.

And now he is calling others, tribals in the very inner recesses of the wild, and even the urbans far and near, to join in the great adventure that is his. He can learn as well as teach lessons that the urbans have long forgotten in the euphoria of being "cultured and sophisticated."

All at Hemalkasa have faith and hope that the call will be heard. Some day. Maybe tomorrow. For no one who has heard that call has remained unmoved, uninterested. Even the youngest worker at camp, Pilloo, Prakash's two-year old son, responds sensitively and creatively to the call. He takes in every situation with an adult seriousness, and concern spills out with a natural facility and compassion. For he is in a world of pain, and mitigating that pain is the service of those with whom he lives. He is often seen directing people to their various works, sending his father to the ailing. "Go, Chotte Baba, cure him," he says to Prakash, and Chotte Baba gets up and makes for the dispensary.

There with his staff, forgetting all discomforts of the environment, all physical ailments, all shortcomings and impending fears, Prakash works with his team. And so abide the three lode-stars—faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.

THE END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His trouble began as soon as he started feeling sorry for her. He had never much cared for women, but this one was very young and she was being thrown to the wolves. . .

COUSIN SHIV AND THE FLOWER CHILD

Fiction by Margaret Bhatty

COUSIN SHIV'S experience with the hippie girl is one of the jokes in the family which he has not been able to live down. It happened in those earlier days when the hippies called themselves the Flower People. Shiv was thirty-five, a confirmed bachelor and very set in his ways.

Everyone agreed he needed to do some walking, for he was terribly out of condition. His shoulders sloped, and his midriff sagged. Someone at his office had talked of the fabulous Valley of Flowers and he suddenly announced his decision to spend his summer holiday hiking there.

None of the family thought he seriously intended to go until he began hunting in the house for his father's old scouting gear. In a tin trunk he found a leather belt with the brass buckle badly tarnished, and he set to polishing it up. It had a small clasp knife with three blades, all blunt, and a clip for hanging a mug.

His old mother was worried. "Is it safe?" she asked.

"What do you mean, Mama? I'm not an adolescent girl!" he said indignantly.

"No—but I was thinking about leopards and wild beasts," she replied.

He regarded her blankly. His right eye is always slower to move than his left, and because both of his eyes are seldom aligned, he often looks very blank.

"It's high in the Himalayas—near Hemkund in Garhwal, at 12,000 feet. Part of the route lies along the way to Badrinath," he explained. That was as much as he knew.

He buckled the belt round his middle and already began to feel different. Squaring his shoulders, he strode up and down the sitting-room, as he swung his arms. Well, he was not so far gone after all. They were putting men over forty on the moon.

"How long will you be away?" Aunty asked.

"End of May," he said. "By the night train. I'll be away for three weeks."

Swinging his arms he bent over and touched his toes. That was unwise. He felt a distinct twinge in his back and straightening up took a deep breath. It was the belt, of course. It was making him do silly things. He took it off. "Someone at the office has lent me his haversack and sleeping bag—I'm all set to go."

It was to prove a memorable holiday. He was destined to return much sooner than he intended, considerably reduced, starving, in fact. Everything went wrong from the very start.

He almost missed his train because he was unaware that the timing had been changed. The guard was already flagging off the train and he had to run for the sleeper coach. His pack bounced on his back, his mug, compass and penknife jangled at his waist. He seemed to be bouncing all over, and became acutely aware of how much he carried on his person that wasn't part of him, and how much was. He put on more speed as though he intended to shed all that fat right there. The mug came unclipped, clattered to the platform, got between his feet, and he kicked it yards away. A group of urchins began cheering him loudly as he ran. But he made it.

Tracking down the number of his berth, he was disgusted to find it occupied. A Flower Child had taken possession of it. He re-checked to make sure, then sat on the edge and held out the silly piece of card.

"Excuse meh!" he said in his best Oxbridge." Ah think thah's some mistake perheps. Ah mean—this seems to beh mah berth."

She was very young, dressed in saffron robes like a Buddhist nun. Around her neck were necklaces of love beads, garlands of marigolds, rosaries of rudraksha beads, wrinkled myrobalan and eucalyptus gum-nuts. She smelt like a native herb-seller. Her hair was straw-coloured, stringy and uncombed. Behind her dark glasses her face was blank.

In reply to Shiv's accented protest, she made a comment in a language he had never heard before. But the tone plainly implied that he might try and take a running jump at himself. Nevertheless, he was prepared to be reasonable, and he appealed to a ticket-checker at the other end of the carriage.

The fellow was short and thin. Hurrying forward he bleated: "Ticket! Ticket!"

The man in the berth opposite Shiv's—a stout businessman, and two young men in the berths above tendered theirs, and he scribbled a mystical sign on each before returning them. The Flower Child lit a cigarette. And when he held his hand out for her ticket, she tendered him a flower.

"Ticket? Ticket?" he repeated. In reply she made a comment identical to the one she had made to Shiv, but with a few words extra, suggesting a certain variation perhaps. Since it was evident she was not English, everyone felt more comfortable and lapsed into Hindustani. A small knot of passengers collected to enjoy the show.

"T-T Sahib, don't let her off," cried a young fellow from the berth above.

"Not on any account!" said the businessman from the bunk opposite. With all this backing, the little ticket-checker felt braver. "Ticket, Madam?" he demanded. She blew a smoke ring at him. It was a beautiful ring.

"Wah! Wah!" someone cried in admiration. It grew wider as it rose towards the official's face and it looked as if it would encircle him like a collar. But the ceiling fan dispersed it.

"Put her off at the next stop!" a voice cried.

The businessman dropped his voice and winked. "*Arey bhai*! Perhaps she is carrying Stuff."

This put a new angle on the situation. Every day one read in the papers of hippies being caught with large hauls of narcotics on them. Here perhaps was a case for the police.

A white-haired old rogue burst out indignantly. "There should be a law against such people coming into the country. It's a shame and a disgrace!"

THE FLOWER CHILD remained unmoved, an expression of complete indifference on her vacant face. And Cousin Shiv began to feel sorry for her. He had never much cared for women, but this one was very young and she was being thrown to the wolves. He looked at the diminutive ticket-checker standing his ground undaunted by smoke rings and in a flash he thought he recognised The Paradox. It was so obvious that he was surprised he had not spotted it earlier. This is a family joke and The Paradox simply means that if an official quite clearly shows—come rain, hail, storm, or cosmic catastrophe—that he will do his duty, then it is only because he wishes most earnestly to be bought off doing it. The ticket-checker looked thin and under-fed. In fact he did not seem to be doing at all well as a mere ticket-checker.

Drawing him aside, Shiv tendered him a five-rupee note under cover of his hand. "Leave her alone, T-T Sahib, I will sleep on the floor. What does it matter? She will get off somewhere in between—"

The man looked sharply at Shiv, studied his worn jeans and checked shirt, his pack, his stomach bulging over his ancient belt, his lazy eye, and he did not like what he saw. Was there some kind of conspiracy? He speculated on what these two might be carrying in their bags. The foreign woman had a worn red canvas one with "Laxatabs the Safest Laxative" printed on one side, and B.O.A.C. on the other. He took Shiv's ticket and scrutinised it closely for some discrepancy. Where was he going? Who was this girl? Where was his luggage? How was he travelling without box or bedding?

"Perhaps they are both going to cross the border to Nepal," someone suggested. Shiv began to sweat. He had been mistaken. It was not The Paradox after all.

"You have insulted me by offering me a bribe," squeaked the ticket-checker, annoyed at being offered a mere five rupees. "I am a conscientious officer of the railways, and I will put this woman off the train unless you pay her fare to the end of the joruney!"

"These bribe-givers," began the businessman with great unction. "It is they who have ruined the country. If they did not offer bribes, no public servant would dare demand them!"

Shiv paid. But he was doing it because he was a gentleman, not for any other reason. "Make a friend for your country" government tourist posters always said. He hoped his gesture would make them all feel ashamed of themselves. But he doubted it.

Opening his sleeping-bag on the floor, he put his haversack under his head for a pillow. He woke once during the night to find the compartment full of the ropey smell of charas fumes, and was happy that the graceless fellows on the bunks above were getting the best of it.

He was up early to get to the lavatory first. The Flower Child was curled asleep on his bunk. As he felt round in his pack for his toothpaste and brush, he wondered what colour eyes she had. During the two weeks she trailed him up and down the mountains, he was destined to discover they were green—sea-green, and icy blue when he tried, quite unsuccessfully, to bridge the Generation Gap.

There would not have been any problem if he had not lost his way. A compass was an overrated invention, Shiv decided. If he had followed his nose, and hardened his heart, he would have fared better. He had all the details on a slip of paper in his wallet' "10 m. from Joshimat, en route Badrinath, Govind Ghat. Follow stream, Gangharia, 10 m. Deoban 22,490." It had made much more sense when he took it all down.

Getting off the train at the railhead he had found himself on a bus full of pilgrims. He bought an Upper Class ticket which entitled him to sit right behind the driver on a hard bench on which the rexine cover kept slipping about. He had breakfasted on a stale loaf and one of the tins of sardines he had brought with him. Once that morning he caught sight of the Flower Child moving about among the pilgrims, giving each a flower. She had freshened two flowers painted onto her pale cheeks with indelible pencil.

He had taken his seat in the bus when the smell of herbs, fresh flowers, unwashed body and burnt molasses assailed his nostrils. He turned to find the Flower Child beside him. She held out a flower which he ignored. Leaning close she stuck it behind his ear. He turned his head away sharply. A really bad case of halitosis, he discovered. Holding out two incense sticks she indicated she wanted them lit. Unable to refuse, he gave her his matchbox. The heavy fragrance, the strong odour of her person and the petrol fumes in the bus made his stomach queasy even hefore the journey began.

There was some delay to begin with. The driver studied the way-bill and counted the passengers. His assistant studied the way-bill and also counted the passengers. They shouted back and forth about the number of "haph seats" and "phul seats", and came to the conclusion that they did indeed have an extra passenger. It was the Flower Child.

The pilgrims, believing she intended to go all the way to the shrine, soon raised her fare among themselves, with an extra five rupees to placate the driver since she was in excess of the number he was permitted to carry.

Between his feet Shiv found, there were large cracks dividing the floor boards, and even a sizeable hole through which he could clearly see the shaft turning. He kept his eyes on the road after the vehicle had tilted over the edge on the first few bends, giving him a fleeting yet complete view of the mountain falling away sheer to the valley where the river gleamed, hundreds of feet below.

The Flower Child dozed, leaning on him. He envied her. She was off and away, turning inwards behind her dark glasses, ranging the vast multi-hued expanses of her psyche, while he sat clutching his pack, keeping his eyes well-aligned and fixed on the road ahead, overcome by the fumes and concentrating on holding down his breakfast. He could not afford to lose it. He had not budgeted for that kind of wastage.

It was the proprietor of a small grimy food-shop at a place where they stopped for lunch, who put Cousin Shiv right off course. The man studied Shiv's garb and gear and asked him if he intended to climb. Shiv was flattered to be recognised as a seasoned mountaineer. So while an urchin plied the Flower Child with puris and potatoes at a tin table, the man told the Sahib of a little-known short-cut right up the opposite mountain which would get him to a village before nightfall. The following morning he would hit the direct road to the Valley of Flowers.

Shiv paid for the girl's lunch and set out, breathing deeply of the mountain air and trying to get the zooming sound of the rattle-trap bus out of his head. He found the short-cut. He found many, in fact. But somehow the ones he took always petered out, or led to the edge of some dizzy precipice.

Sitting on a stone to get his breath, he was startled by the sudden appearance of a long line of village belles coming down the mountain with head-loads of green grass, swinging their bottoms in fine style as they walked. The woman leading them squealed when she came upon Shiv. Immediately he was surrounded by a chattering, giggling group. Dark eyes peered at him from under the bundles of grass, and white teeth flashed. They examined him with great curiosity, and he gathered their comments were not complimentary. Rising to his feet he began to stride up the mountain. But he could not keep it up for long. Out of sight of the silly creatures, he stopped, gasping. Then, glancing down the slope, he saw the tarred surface of the motor road. Without hesitation he plunged down, covering much of the distance on the seat of his pants.

He followed the road expecting to get a ride on some passing vehicle. By evening he arrived at a small village in a valley where the shadows were already lengthening. There were three poor buildings, one of which he recognised as a shop with its front open. He quickened his footsteps but before he reached it, he came across the Flower Child. She was sitting on a wall and eating hard, green peaches, hugging her red canvas bag. He felt sorry to think of the havoc those peaches would play with her young stomach.

So they had travelled together for days, and she was not much of a burden for she ate very little. There was not much to tempt the appetite in any case—nettles or spinach with black millet bread, soggy rice a pale pink in colour, and daal with pieces of turmeric floating free in it. But she ate great gobs of jaggery—filthy stuff with pieces of straw and grit stuck to it. Once Shiv came upon an ancient packet of biscuits wrapped in cellophane with bright pink icing-sugar. When he bought them for the girl, she had laughed for the first time. Most of her teeth were bad.

She was on her way to Nowhere, and she seemed in no hurry to get there. Wherever she stopped, she took out her cheelum from her bag and filling it carefully, placed a live ember on top from the shopman's fire. What went on inside her? Shiv wondered—in a fatherly kind of way. Did she think at all? She was always very blank even when not stoned out of her senses.

At night he usually secured a tiny upstairs room in a wayside shop. Below, in a flagged courtyard peasants always sat in the evenings on plank benches, to gossip and pass round a hookah. There were no windows so Shiv left the door open for fresh air and spread out his sleeping bag. By now they had left the motor road and were well into the interior of the district. Sitting with his back against the wall he wondered how much further it was to the Valley of Flowers. Opposite him, she sat with her cheelum. They had nothing to say to each other, and finally she went to sleep on his bag, forcing him to use the rough homespun blanket borrowed from the shopman, which smelt of horse and was pokey and full of fleas.

WHERE WAS SHE GOING? Shiv wondered, always careful to keep his mind off some of the possibilities of the situation in which he found himself. But he regarded himself as too much of a gentleman to take advantage of her extreme youth. Didn't she have people who cared for her? Worried about her? Did she expect to find the answers she was looking for in the kind of life she lived? And was that why she travelled so hopefully? Perhaps, she, too, was searching for the Valley of Flowers—a kind of El Dorado.

This idea so intrigued him, that he wanted to wake her there and then and ask her. But he knew that if he woke her it would not be to ask that kind of question. In any case she would not be able to understand his language, though she might have no difficulty understanding another kind of sign language. Somewhat guilty about this momentary lapse on his part, he turned his back to where she lay and tried to sleep.

He was always up and about before her, and after completing his toilet, he had a glass of tea downstairs before the shopman's fire and settled their account for board and lodging. It was when he discovered that she was getting charas on his account that he grew indignant. It had not even occurred to him that they were sojourning through the land of *cannabis sattiva,* and the people were in fact preparing their fields on the uplands for sowing the new crop of hemp. He believed she had taken advantage of his goodness. Besides, he had not budgeted for keeping a hippie female in charas and ganja. So one morning he gently rolled her off his bag, packed his belongings and walked out on her.

He thought the peasants very stupid. None of them had heard of the Valley of Flowers. "Which peak is Deoban?" he asked, and each pointed out a different one. Jaskar Valley? Badyar Pass? Where were they? They shrugged their shoulders and went back to breaking clods in their terraced fields.

They had no sense of distance either. They told him a village was just over the hill. And when he went on, he found another hill. He found himself walking more than he had ever intended to in a lifetime.

One evening, at the top of a steep climb which took him to eight thousand feet, he came across a police check-post and was stopped by the two men on duty there because he did not have a permit to proceed further.

"Restricted Area," they said. "Not even Indian nationals can go beyond this second frontier without a permit from the District Magistrate."

Where then was the Valley of Flowers? Had he indeed walked almost to the border of Tibet? Perhaps China lay only a few more days' journey ahead. He felt rather pleased about that possibility. The family would be terribly impressed.

The policemen were kind and despatched a man to the district town four days' journey away, they said, with ten rupees and Shiv's application for a permit. They arranged for a small room for him over the shop on the ridge where the proprietor provided him meals. The fare was poor, but it was cheap. He lay about in the sun a great deal within view of a marvellous view of the snow ranges, and waited for his permit to arrive.

In the evenings peasants always dropped in at the shop after driving their bullocks home and hanging up their ploughs. They sat round on plank benches or the low courtyard wall and gossiped. It was chilly on the ridge for a sharp wind always blew across it, so the shopman always had a fire burning in the centre of the circle.

Everyone was curious about Shiv. he came from faraway *Dilli.* To them it was like another planet.

Though Shiv did not know it there was much speculation about his presence at the post. His appearance has never been one to inspire any confidence. And he now had more than a week's growth of beard. The rumour in the village was that he was a notorious Pakistani spy, and the policemen were waiting for instructions from the District Magistrate.

The two men were hoping that Shiv would get tired of waiting and leave, because the ten rupees he had given them, along with his application, had been used to purchase two bottles of brew in the valley. On the other hand, if he insisted on going further without a permit, they would allow him that privilege for a tidy sum of money. Meanwhile, they were glad to drink his tea.

One evening while Shiv was holding forth about a certain scandal which, he told them, had rocked the capital, they heard the sound of a cow-bell coming up the road to the ridge. They all peered into the darkness.

"Whose bullock is out at this time of night?" asked the shopman. The bell jangled as though the creature were running. Then the sound of thumping footsteps came up the road, and out of the darkness emerged a wild figure, making for the firelight with hair flying and robes blowing in the wind.

Shiv's heart sank and he drew back quickly out of the light, partially concealed behind the shoulder of the policeman sitting beside him on the bench.

For a moment everyone was too surprised to speak but stared at the Flower Child as she crouched panting before the fire, frightened out of her wits. Who was this white woman? And how came she to be running about at this hour of the night on the mountain road with a cow-bell round her neck? What had so frightened her? "Probably the leopard that's been prowling about lately," one man suggested. "It must have followed the sound of the bell thinking someone's cow was loose."

"Foreigner?" demanded the more senior of the policeman of the girl. She looked up at him standing over her and gave no reply.

"She probably doesn't understand," said the shopman.

Neither of the policemen knew English. The only other person in the village who did was the schoolmaster who had studied up to the fourth book. But he was away since school was closed for the monsoon sowing season. This left only Shiv, and they turned to him where he sat wishing he could vanish into thin air

Following the direction of their gaze, the Flower Child recognised his legs clad in jeans, and she jumped up with a glad cry. Sobbing with relief, she fell on his neck. Overcome with the smell of her, and entangled with gumnuts, cow-bell and rosaries, Shiv hastily unclasped her arms, and turned away in disgust. She sat down at his feet, chattering.

"What does she say?" asked the policeman.

"God knows," replied Shiv, genuinely mystified.

"Foreigner?"

Shiv studied her as though he were seeing her for the first time. "She looks as if she might be," he replied.

"Do you know her?"

"No!"

"But she seems to know you—"

"There was someone like her on the bus going up to Joshimat," Shiv replied, creasing his forehead and trying hard to remember.

"Has she a permit?"

"How should I know? Ask her."

The man addressed the girl. "Per-meet? Permeet?" he said.

She ignored him, and sat hugging her knees as she gazed into the fire. The policeman began to feel something less than a god, and he was annoyed with Shiv for making him appear silly.

"We'll have to detain her. Foreigners entering the Second Frontier without a permit can be jailed," he said severely.

"Suit yourself. It's not my business," Shiv replied.

"And anyone aiding and abetting a foreigner to enter the Restricted Area will also be sent to jail." Shiv shrugged and made no reply.

"Come upstairs with us," he said nastily, and Shiv had to follow the two men to their room over the shop. They grilled him till late into the night before they allowed him to retire to the smaller room he occupied on the other side of a partition of planks. And they put the Flower Child in with him.

Shiv could hear clearly every sound that came from the other side of the partition where the Law removed its trousers and lay down on creaky cots each night. He could imagine the two men lying with ears cocked for some slight sound that might prove that he was indeed "aiding and abetting" the foreigner. Not until five days had passed did it dawn on him that he was in the middle of The Paradox.

He took the two policeman aside the following morning, determined not to give in too easily. "I know the Chief of the Criminal Investigation Bureau in Delhi," he said severely. "In fact he lives in the same street—right across from my house—"

"Good! You must tell him about us when you go back, and how we are doing our duty in the best interests of the country," replied the senior policeman.

"All right, how much?" Shiv asked, giving in.

They settled on eighty rupees to allow him to proceed without a permit. But the girl would have to go back because that would be a serious breach of the law. Shiv paid; but the following morning, while it was still dark, he took his pack and the Flower Child and crept away leaving a large bill—which he hoped the shopman would be paid from the money he had given the policemen.

They walked steadily and got onto the motor road again on the second day. "We'll wait here for a bus to pick us up," Shiv said to the girl who looked her usual blank self. A small stream rushed down the mountain-side at this point and was spanned by a stone culvert. Climbing over the rocks higher up, Shiv came upon a clear blue pool of water, and decided to take a quick bath.

The icy water made him tingle all over, and he splashed about and became rather noisy as he shouted. When he emerged he wrapped a small towel about his waist and stood for some time enjoying the warmth of the sun.

He wondered where the Flower Child was, and peering over the large boulder behind which he had been bathing, he saw her lying on a small stretch of sand. She had thrown off her ochre robe and sandals, and lay with her face buried in her hands, taking the sun on her back.

What drew him forward was pure curiosity. Flowers decorated her back, faded and smudged now with sweat and grime — flowers and graffiti in strange scripts and languages. Her lumbar vertebrae were spelled out with the English word "Love". He crept closer, fascinated by the great variety of theme, and intrigued by the circumstances under which all this art work must have been executed. Even the backs of her thighs had been decorated.

Putting out a tentative finger, he gently traced the figure *Om* on the small of her back. He was now on all fours in the sand, his towel forgotten. At his touch she started and turned over quickly. He saw that sand and pebbles had left other patterns on her pale skin. She had also been busy freshening the flowers on her front with red and blue pencil. Petals encircled her breasts and her navel. Flowers grew on her stomach, their stems reaching downwards where they were rooted in her sex. There, too, he could see the word "Love" over-written. She had carefully filled in again the slogans on her thighs: "God is Love, and Love is God"—a theme often displayed on trucks and cabs in Delhi.

Shiv found himself suddenly flooded with innocent astonishment at the childlike naivete of it all. He was filled with a kind of childish happiness. He wanted to scamper over the rocks, splash in the water, roll on the sand, and shout in his naked innocence. He felt that if he had a tail, he would wag it vigorously, puppy-joy fashion. He did none of these things.

Instead he put out a hand and placed it flat on her stomach. He felt the muscles tighten under his touch, and he grinned, his lazy eye rolling and his eyelids blinking fast. But when he looked into her eyes, he felt as though he had plunged once again into the freezing water. Her tace was stoney, and her eyes a hard cold ice-blue. Her obvious contempt so shocked him that he did not feel merely naked, he felt entirely exposed. Then sitting up, she put her face close to his and shrieked above the sound of the mountain torrent, blasting him with her bad breath in a language of which he could make nothing.

It was at that moment that he caught the sound of the bus. Scrambling onto the highest boulder, he shouted frantically. The thing had already crossed the bridge and was about to go round the bend. The driver did not see him, but the occupants in the back seats stared up in amusement. For a fleeting moment they saw an angry man, barebodied in the stream bed, holding a small towel before him to conceal the state he was in. But what interested them more was the girl who stood beside him, nude, startingly white, clad only in necklaces.

Shiv was furious. The sponging little bitch had made him lose the only bus that went through that way. He had had enough. Climbing into his trousers again, he shouldered his pack and stalked off, making his way down to a village. There she trailed him later in the afternoon, wearing her dark glasses, her grimy robe covering all the faded messages of flower-power and love. She was there beside him the following morning when he went along the pine-clad slope, following a path which the villagers assured him would bring them to a regular bus stop lower down the valley.

At the top of a climb Shiv paused to get his breath. They had eaten nothing that morning, and he was feeling hungry. He remembered the last tin of sardines in his pack and brought it out. The key snapped off as usual, and his scout knife made a small hole through which he could see the silver sides of the little fish gleaming temptingly. Then the blade broke and got left inside. It was rusty and he would probably get ptomaine poisoning, but he was very hungry and did not care. Taking up a stone he pounded the tin. Oil spurted out onto his shirt front and over his hands. He now smelt no better than the Flower Child. In disgust he hurled the tin into the panorama.

He was sitting glumly on a stone and drawing patterns in the dust with a stick, when he was roused by the girl touching his arm. She pointed over the mountains and asked: "Khat-mandu?"

Despite her bad teeth, there was something rather charming in the way she pronounced the name. So that was where she wished to go! he thought with surprise. It should have occurred to him before this. The chance to get rid of her was too good to be missed.

"Khat-mandu? There!" he cried, springing to his feet and pointing exactly east, where he knew Nepal must be. "Over there—beyond that third range," he said. "The Promised Land!" A few hundred miles over the mountains.

He was laughing with relief and she joined in, nodding her head and repeating: "Khat-mandu!"

"It's all there—waiting for you, Flower Child. Infectious hepatitis, V.D., plenty of pot, and all the right kind of vibrations," and he pointed out a small path which descended from the ridge and disappeared into the trees. "The Highroad to Nepal!" he cried, feeling somewhat ashamed of himself. She needed no coaxing to set off, with her red canvas bag slung over one shoulder. He was glad she had left the cow-bell at the police checkpost—otherwise a leopard might get her.

She looked very small as she went off between the tall pines. Where would she end up finally?

"Flower Child? Flower Child?" he called on sudden impulse. She stopped and looked up. He went down the path to her, taking out his wallet. There was a ten-rupee note, a five and some ones. He took out the five, and then changed his mind and gave her the ten instead. She smiled and said something which he hoped was a "Thank you", and went on her way.

Hurrying to the top of the ridge, Shiv dashed down the other side at top speed, making as fast as he could for the motor road. It was when he unrolled his sleeping bag that evening to take

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out money for his bus ticket down to the railhead the following morning, that he discovered she had robbed him. Putting together all the money he had, there was just enough for a Lower Class ticket on the bus, a third class to Delhi, twenty-five paise in coins, and two twenty-paise stamps.

He might try going on the train without a ticket; but he shuddered to think what would happen if he came upon The Paradox. The railways had lately turned tough with ticketless travellers. "Did you know that it now costs more to travel without a ticket?" their posters said. Perhaps he might walk the distance—a week to the railhead, another month to Delhi—a great deal more walking than he had planned to do.

He spent the twenty paise on peanuts, eating them carefully since he had to subsist on them for the whole day. But he got a seat over one of the rear wheels, and though he fixed both his eyes on the tip of the driver's ear, he began to notice that whereas the passengers in front merely tilted in their places on curves, he seemed to be going in a semi-circle on every bend, curving half-round the mountain each time. It was too much. He put his head out of the rear window and lost all the peanuts he had eaten.

At the railhead he tried to trade the stamps for bananas. The fruit vendor took them, examined them carefully, then looked at Shiv. He now had two weeks' growth of beard on his face, his eyes were bloodshot and the lazy eye refused to move at all. His trousers hung loose and bagging at his waist, and he had been burnt black by the Himalayan sun. The fruit-seller returned the stamps without a word. In the train Shiv found himself sitting next to a child who was eating roasted gram with maddening slowness. And the precious seeds fell on the floor where people trampled them underfoot. It brought tears to his eyes. Tightening the scout belt to the last hole, he sat with his legs drawn up, and his head on his knees.

AUNT MOHINI said he ate almost thirty puris when he got home. She knew because she made them herself since it was too late at night to wake the cook-woman. She's a widow and Shiv is her only son. She was terribly upset to see him so run down.

"What was it like—the Valley of Flowers?" she asked, when he had fallen into bed.

"There were flowers—and flowers—" he mumbled, thinking of the Flower Child's neat bottom all covered with them.

The following morning when he was still asleep, his mother tossed out the sleeping bag and pack onto the lawn to sun them, fearing they were infested with bugs. In an inside pocket she came across a passport, and confronted Shiv with it.

He stared in astonishment at it. It belonged to the Flower Child. She looked clean and washed and much neater than he remembered her. Her name was Annie Dubois. He tried it for pronunciation. Du-byo? Du-bwah? It sounded French; but she was Dutch. So she had been speaking Dutch all the time—Double-Dutch, perhaps.

"I'll post this to the King of Nepal," he said, still somewhat fuddled. "His Highness will have it all stamped and pretty by the time Annie Dubois trudges into Khatmandu—in three months' time."

None of the family could get Shiv to talk about his trek to the Valley of Flowers. And it was not until much later that it came out he had not even got there. Where then had he been during those two weeks? And what had he been up to ranging the mountains in the company of a young hippie girl? **THE END**

NEXT MONTH IN IMPRINT

IMAGES OF BRITISH INDIA

Excerpts from the book *Plain Tales From The Raj*, edited by Charles Allen, published by Andre Deutsch and the British Broadcasting Corporation, London.

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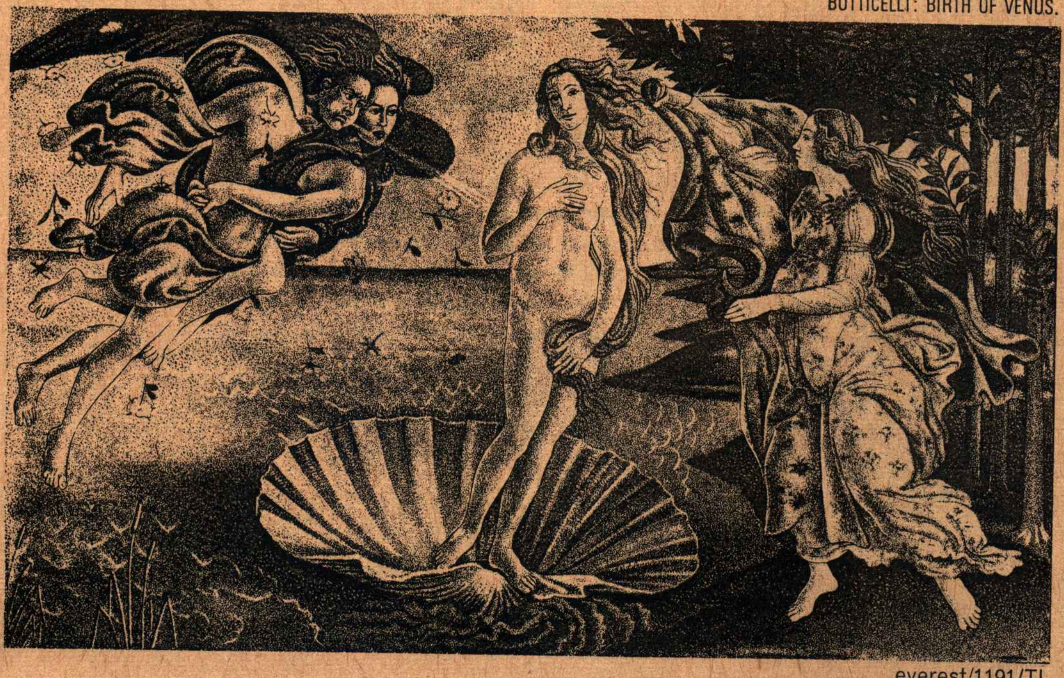

BOTTICELLI: BIRTH OF VENUS.

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Mohan Khokar was a close friend and associate of Uday Shankar for many years. This interview, previously unpublished, is the only first-hand archival material left to posterity on the great dancer's thoughts and ideas on many aspects of his life and work. . .

UDAY SHANKAR

An interview by Mohan Khokar*

When do you think you first got interested in dance?

You know my mother always wanted a daughter. We were seven brothers but no sister. So my mother used to dress me up as a girl and play the gramophone and ask me to dance. So she was the first person to encourage me in my childhood.

Before you went to London to study painting and you were in India did you have any opportunity to learn any dancing?

No, I did not receive any training. What I saw and what impressed me I used to imitate on my own or at times also try to improve the movements to make them look more decorative. The very first chance I got to show my skill in dancing was at the Wembley Exhibition in London. This was arranged by Lady Dorabji Tata, a family friend. I gave some idea to the musicians there who composed something for me. I called my piece the Dance of Shiva, though I knew nothing about Shiva. I just jumped around, most probably. What I did God alone knows, but it turned out to be a great success and I received a lot of praise.

I suppose at that time you had no intention of becoming a dancer, for you were pursuing painting seriously.

Yes, I was very much interested in painting. I won two top prizes, one for self-portraiture and the other for a figure composition on the dance of Krishna and Radha. I thought I was faring excellently when one day my teacher Sir William Rothenstein called me and said: "Shankar, I fear you are taking our disease to India. Please do not do that. I have stayed eight years in India with Rabindranath Tagore. The soul of India can be seen in her painting and sculpture. You are doing things our way: don't." He then asked me not to go to the College for one month and gave me a letter to the Curator of the British Museum. There I was given so many books on India to read—on the temples, caves, arts, history. I had not known anything of all this. Sir William Rothenstein opened my

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*Mohan Khokar is Secretary of the Sangeet Natak Akademi; formerly Head of the Department of Dance at the University of Baroda, the first University in the country to introduce, in 1950, Graduate and post-Graduate courses in dance.

Uday Shankar—portrait taken two years ago.

eyes and made me see India.

When did you first meet Pavlova and how did your association with her help you?

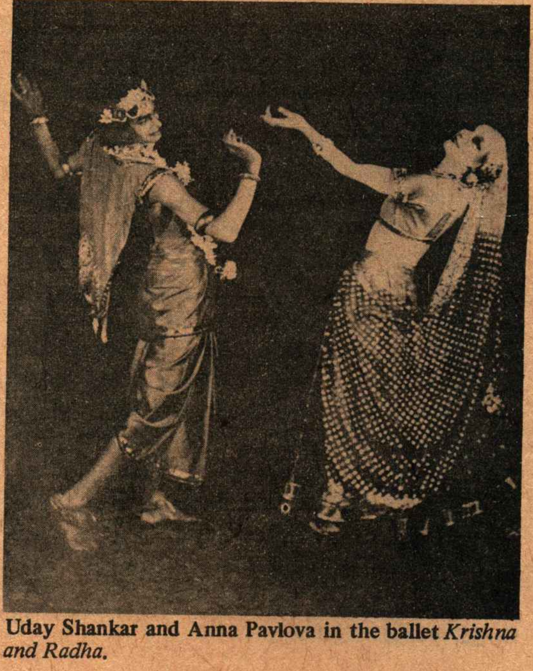
She was on a tour of the world and was in London at the time. I was taken to her house by a common friend. She served us tea. The way she poured the tea, the way she moved her hands, all this was so attractive that I just could not take my eyes off her. Every movement of hers was as if she was dancing. She wanted to produce two ballets on Indian themes and I helped her in that. These were "Krishna and Radha" and "A Hindu Wedding". When she left for her tour of America she included me in her troupe. We travelled for nine months continuously. Then one day I went to Pavlova and asked her if she would care to retain me as a regular dancer in her group. She shouted back: "If you have any intention of learning our dancing, get out. You should go to India and bring something of yours to show us. There are wonders in your country and you want to try our things! Never, never, never." I am thankful to Pavlova for today if I exist as a dancer it is mainly because of her.

What came after your tour with Pavlova?

I returned to Paris. My father was there and he was to leave for India and he asked me if I would like to go back with him. I said no, I'd prefer to remain there. That is how I stayed on in Europe for eleven years. I engaged two girls, Italians. We made a trio and performed for revues and cabarets. Having been with Pavlova and having appeared in some of the biggest theatres of the world it seemed just dirty to perform in cabarets where all night long people were drinking and enjoying themselves. But now I think this was really a great thing in my life for I came to know show business in the raw. Gradually I built up a programme for better theatres and concert halls. At times I got engagements in exhibitions where I had to dance in spells from morning till evening. I remember I had to dance even when I had high fever and when my body was soaked wet with rain. There were times when my shoes had no soles and to ward off the cold I used to tuck newspapers inside my waistcoat. And there is no count of the number of times I must have pawned anything of what I had for sheer survival.

I remember your saying that Ananda Coomaraswamy's book "The Mirror of Gestures" had at one stage inspired you.

Yes, he presented it to me when I was in America. But for a year and a half I was travel-



Uday Shankar and Anna Pavlova in the ballet *Krishna and Radha*.

Uday Shankar and wife Amala in the film ***Kalpana.***

ling and didn't care to see it. Then one night I had nothing to do and so I opened the book. It carries a picture of Nataraja. I kept looking at this and felt an urge to try out the pose. Then I discovered that this was not merely a pose but the centre of hundreds of movements that moved from one to another and finished with that pose. I invented movements which I thought emanated from the Nataraja pose. Of course, at that time I did not know at all who Nataraja was or what he represented.

What is most memorable to you after your return to India after eleven years stay in Europe?

I had a chance to go to Kerala, as a guest of the Maharaja of Travancore. There for the first time I saw Kathakali. I could not believe it, but what I saw was something quite similar to what I had been doing without ever having seen or heard of any dance form of Kerala. My technique certainly looked much like this and I was surprised how it had come to me. Even today I have no answer for this. I thought of having a guru and after considerable search I found Guru Shankaran Namboodri. He was a godlike person. When he entered a room it looked full, without him empty. I learnt very little from him directly. For me it was good enough to watch him. How he created an environment is unimaginable. He died in my arms, in Almora. He died of a heart ailment, the same disease that I have. There were also with me at Almora Guru Kandappa, Guru Amobi Singh and Ustad Allauddin Khan, all giants, you know.

What led you to start the Almora Centre?

From 1931 to 1938 I was on a tour of the world with my troupe. We first went to Europe. Mr. Leonard Elmhirst happened to see my show and liked it immensely. He invited me to Dartington Hall, near London. I soon became a close friend of Mr. Elmhirst, his wife Dorothy and their daughter Beatrice. Then one day he said: "Why don't you open a Centre of dance in India?" I said I would love to. "Will 20,000 pounds help you make a beginning?" I was asked. I could never have imagined such a thing in my life. I thanked him. But he said: "Don't thank us. Thank your country that you are from

Uday Shankar in the dance *Kartikeya.*

there and you are able to bring us something from it." So that is how it all started. Mr. Elmhirst was a great educationalist. Sriniketan started by Rabindranath Tagore was entirely financed by him.

The Centre functioned only for five years. What led to its closure?

Well, wonderful work was done there, no doubt. But of course when you run an institution like that, all kinds of people are there. I was very free with everybody and I loved them all. But the freedom I gave, some people took advantage of it. I was very intimate with everybody, and they were proud that they knew me inside out. And so a lot of problems started cropping up. Added to all this was bad luck. The War came. That spoilt everything. There was food scarcity. The 20,000 pounds had by then all been spent. It was very painful for me to decide to close the Centre. But I realised that if I had gone on I would have been a hypocrite. The money which I had received was sacred for me and I spent it for these people. I felt sure that the Centre could not go on unless I started the whole thing afresh. The experience was very tragic.

About your training programme at the Centre, did you have a blueprint ready or did the whole thing develop through experience as you went along?

It developed as we went on. I devised my own system of instruction. There was a general class every day. This was very good for teaching the pupils how to plan, how to concentrate, how to create. It also developed their imagination. For example, I would ask them just to walk. Then enjoin some problem and ask them to walk concentrating on that problem. Or to walk with clapping or body movement. There is no end to it. The idea was to make their body and mind absolutely alert and responsive. Then there was the composition class. Sometimes I gave them a thesis, at other times they were free to choose anything on their own. There was great freedom to express themselves. Great freedom. This encouraged them also to criticise the work of others as well as their own. You know how much one can learn from criticism. I did not allow uniformity. I wanted each individual to express himself or herself in his or her own way. I know that if there are a thousand people all trying to do the same thing there will be a thousand ways of doing it. And all this was a great training for myself too.

How is the music for your dances and ballets organised?

I will give you an example. I asked Ustad Allauddin Khan once to give me music. What is the story, what is the mood? he asked. I said love. What is the time of the setting? he asked. I said night is finished and it is morning. So he composed a piece of five minutes in Bhairava. I did a dance to this, lasting four minutes. This was called Sringar, one of the most successful numbers in my repertoire. Sometimes the music was there and I created movements to conform to it. At other times I did the dance and the music was then arranged. But in both cases I had to look after the music myself, though I must confess I am not a musician in any sense of the word. Every movement you can do has the feel of sound coming with it, I believe. Movement has got a melody of its own. The movement must express the spirit of the music and vice versa.

From *Shankarscope*—**an amalgam of the stage and the screen.**

Of course, I have always used only Indian instruments. Even the violin and harmonium I have not allowed. I have collected hundreds of instruments from all over India. I have eighty kinds of drums alone. Believe me, before I started, no one even touched many of these instruments. I was the first person to bring the use of measured sound for dances on the stage.

Now, some of your dance compositions are very brief and some rather long. How do you work this out?

There is a purpose. I do not think any dance should be with the idea of giving A to Z. I do not believe in that. The same thing is true of music also. What you want to say you must say in as short a time as possible. What you say must of course be beautiful, powerful and above all very simple. I do not want to give the impression that I am showing off what I can do. The number should be short, so the audience does not get bored. The result is that before my audience really gets to know what I am trying to do my piece is finished. The image lingers in their mind. People may like some long dances, such as compositions in the classical tradition, but their mind is at times invaded by other thoughts. Whatever I personally compose I try to do as short as possible. Till I composed "Prakriti-Ananda", which is one hour and forty-five minutes, my longest ballet was "Samanyakshati", forty-five minutes. Of course my Ramlila shadow play is long—nearly two hours—but that is a spectacle. All the time there must be something new to capture the mind of the audience and not to let it get away from what is being shown. My early ballets were very short. "Labour and Machinery" and "Rhythm of Life" were about fifteen minutes each. My solo dances "Indra" and "Kartikeya" were less than four minutes each. In my dances and ballets something all the time keeps happening in quick succession to sharply engage the mind of the beholders.

If not precisely having studied them you must have seen many folk and tribal dances in your travels. Did you ever use these in the original or adapt them for your requirement?

No, I have never used them in the original. I made categories of movements, such as decorative, devotional, martial and so forth. I must tell you that for my folk dances I created the movements. I do not think you will find these movements anywhere, but still you will see they are folk. Somewhere, somehow I must have seen some folk movement and then imagined and allowed something to be born of me. Often, seeing one movement gave me the idea of a completely new and different movement. When you see my folk dances you will always think they are folk dances. But if you wish to find out from what part of India my movements are taken you will find no answer. You will agree they are folk, they feel folk, but they cannot be identified.

Has any of your work, including your exercises, derived influence from modern dance in the West?

No. The thought is ridiculous. I will tell you my true opinion of modern dance. I have great antipathy to it. I had seen so much of classical ballet in Europe it was shocking for me when I first saw modern dance. I felt it was something being done just for the sake of doing something new. Sorry, modern dance does not touch me. In the composition, in the way the theme, if any, is built up, I did not find anything modern. I found it more human, more natural. But I did not learn or derive anything from it. Now it is a fashion to use the word choreography in India. But I learnt this more from the Pavlova company than from anywhere alse. Another thing I could learn from the West is how to compose and give ever-changing patterns of the body covering space. This I watched carefully in their ballet and then tried to see how I could use all that in my dances and ballets. Of course I make up mine own ideas, but seeing their work helped me. Mary Wigman, Martha Graham and other modern dancers do not impress me at all. I admire their courage, that is all.

What is your attitude to worship?

I believe in God but in a different way. I do not believe in worshipping images or in rituals. When we want something and then worship and ask God for it, it amuses me. I feel this is like bribing God. Sheer hypocrisy. I feel God has created us and given us everything. It is useless to ask for anything. What we have we should go on with and make the best of it. The way we keep asking God for favours, he must be laughing. As dancing became more and more part of my life, more and more I saw God in different ways. When I danced I felt I was no more with the public. The experience was something holy, something beyond me. I was not myself. I was someone else. It was such a wonderful feeling. The stage was more than a temple to me. It was like being nearer to God.

When you did the dance of Shiva, Kartikeya or Indra, did you also inwardly identify yourself with these deities?

No, not that. But I completely went out of myself. It was like something possessed me. I forgot myself. I was no more Uday Shankar. And I forgot I was dancing for the public and I had no concern with how the public was taking me. No such thought came to me. I just went through my paces in a stage of enchantment.

Before beginning your performances did you have some kind of prayer?

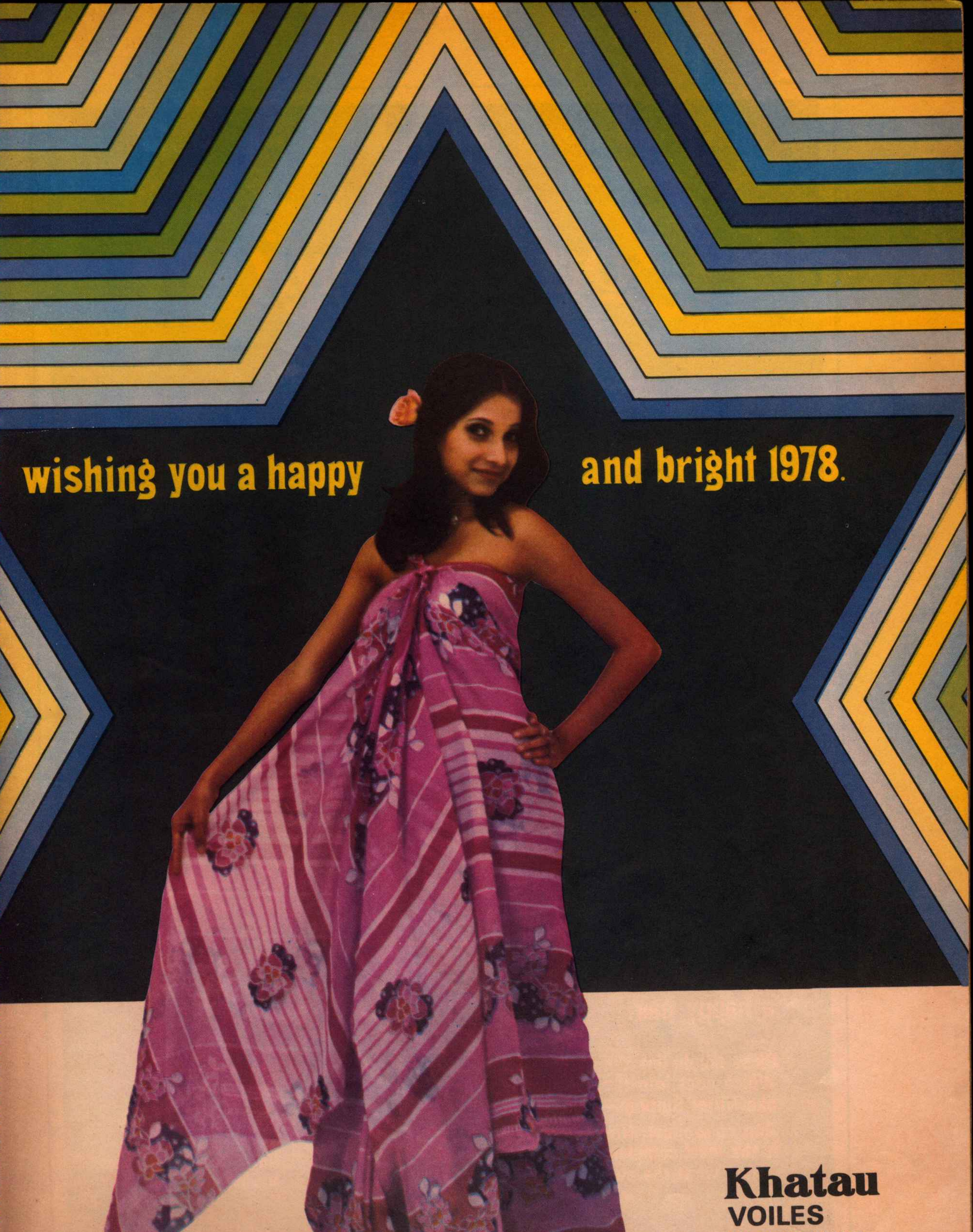
I always prayed. And that prayer is very peculiar. The few best friends I have had in my life, those who did something for me, I always thought of them. And above all, I acknowledged I really knew nothing. Every time, for a few seconds I closed my eyes and said: Thank you God that you have given me this chance.

Has it ever happened that you have felt that the struggle has not been worth it? Or did you always have the courage and determination to go on and on?

Oh, I had always the courage to go on. Because the whole thing, dance, grew and got into my blood. Now in old age I hope I will not become broke. Because the time has come when I cannot dance to get money. I hope that situation does not come at the end of my life and that somehow I can pull on.

Do you still have the desire to dance?

I would love to. Some weeks ago I told my doctors of this, but they refused. Even the little exercise I used to do every day by way of walking has been stopped. They want me to take complete rest. What they understand I do not. I feel like a young person and wish to jump about. I have to obey them. Whether I believe them or not, all this at times frightens me. I want to do something always. If I cannot do myself, I want to help other people to do. I must think, I must be active, doing something useful, something new, all the time. I have something like a built-in *go* in me, you know. If that is not allowed its say, I will be dead. **THE END**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What is it that makes a woman deny herself the fulfilment of motherhood, the joys of wifehood, and seek a lonely life of prayer and penance? Sathya Saran goes out in search of the answers. And comes up with more questions. . .

OF DIVINE BONDAGE

By Sathya Saran

THE OLD MAN was dying. He lay helpless, his great eyes staring painfully into the distance, his mouth slack with fatigue. The woman sat beside him, spotless in her white sari. One hand held a glass of soup; the other gently stroked the man's wizened arm. An eternity passed. The man let out one last breath, and failed to draw it in again. The eyes glazed. Slowly, with a sigh, the woman murmured a prayer, then drew down the papery eyelids. One more destitute had been spared the misery of dying alone. Sister Martha covered the face with a sheet, and rose to call her Superior.

* * *

The school bell clanged the end of another hectic day. As if the sound had removed an invisible bond, pandemonium broke loose. The silence of the classroom was flooded with the sound of a hundred excited voices. Books slammed shut, desks banged and a sea of blue uniforms surged out all over the compound. Sister Catherine stood patiently near the door, marshalling the children, letting the older girls out, keeping the younger ones in till their parents called for them. The surge abated. Finally, the last child was gone. Sister Catherine closed the great iron doors shut. School time was over. It was time for prayers; and work.

* * *

The traffic whizzed past. It was a busy highway. In the intense summer heat, the tar road seemed to glisten, and the air was still. Oblivious of both the traffic and the heat, the little procession walked along, slowly, without hurry, without any sign of distress. There were both men and women in the procession. They wore long white robes. Their hair was cropped close to the head; their feet were bare. They were Jain monks and nuns, moving on their eternal pilgrimage, going from one town to another preaching their saint's creed of non-violence, of poverty and purity.

* * *

Every religion has its saints. And those who aspire to be saintly. Men as well as women. For a man it is easy to remain aloof, alone. But woman by nature is a more gregarious creature—fond of company, of talk and laughter and trifles. What is it then that makes a woman seek a life of seclusion, of service? of selfless dedication? What is it that makes her leave her home, her family; urges her to deny herself the fulfilment of motherhood, the joys of wifehood, and seek a lonely life of prayer and penance? The glimpses I have had into the lives of such women make me ask these questions. And my search for the answers leads me on. I visit convents, temples, ashrams. And discover new questions in the process.

* * *

THE JAIN temple stands hidden behind shops of grain and cloth. I walk through dusty lanes to meet the Jain nuns who are living in the temple. The room is spotlessly clean. I leave my chappals outside the door and enter.

CHEESE PLEASE! Nuns of the Mt. Carmel School in a 1968 photo. Their habit has been modified now: they wear white and do not cover their chins and ears.

They watch me silently, smiling when my gaze meets theirs. I sit before the Guruji; the eldest nun of them all. Her name is Abhay Shriji. She looks ageless to me–ageless, sexless, dressed in white muslin, with hair cropped close to her head. Abhay Shriji speaks little Hindi. She knows only Gujarati. So I talk to her through an interpreter–a younger nun whose eyes sparkle with laughter as I ask her a series of rather personal questions.

The Jain nuns have a tough life. It is of their own choosing, and they are happy in it. Demanding no release or relaxation, they follow their self-made rules with utter dedication. Once a woman becomes a nun, my interpreter Samay Yagna tells me, she has to learn the scriptures. Then she must adopt the 5 Laws which demand that she tell no lies, do no injury to life, have no personal possessions, commit no theft and practise chastity. This is only the beginning. For as Samay Yagna speaks I realize the enormity of the sacrifice a woman must undergo once she becomes a nun. No Jain nun can touch fire; thus she is not allowed to cook, which means she must beg her food–a little from each Jain household, but not too much. And as hoarding is sin, she must beg every meal separately. She can eat only twice a day, and never after sunset. Moreover she must drink only boiled water. If weather is bad, or she is sick, she may have to go without food and water until someone brings it to her. "Though of the world, we are outside it," Samay Yagna tells me. "We dispense with luxuries like daily baths." She laughs as my eyes widen in surprise. No bath? I repeat, incredulous. No bath, she asserts. Only once a month we sponge ourselves with boiled water. . .

"We have no home," Abhay Shriji says when I ask her where she comes from. "We nuns are not allowed to remain in one place–we are constantly on the move. Only in the 4 months of the monsoons can we seek shelter in any one town." The nuns move from city to city, town to town, wherever they are invited by their diciples, and they travel on foot. They wear no footwear, and

Community prayers during Diwali time. The nuns, being Indian, celebrate Diwali and other major Hindu festivals with singing and prayers—Christian style.

carry their belongings on their backs. And wherever they go, they preach, give lectures, and offer spiritual advice to those who seek it. "The rule of chastity is the strictest," Samay Yagna continues. "A woman nun cannot touch a male—even if it is a 2-day old child." And she tells me the terrible story of one of her sister nuns.

The nun fell ill; very ill (what was her illness, I asked; Samay Yagna shook her head—"who cares", she said, "what name one gives to God's will, enough to say she was ill.") A lady doctor operated on her to cure her. The operation was not very successful. One evening she was taken seriously ill, and an emergency operation had to be performed. A male doctor performed the operation. Luckily she survived. And grew well. But when she knew a man had touched her body, her heart recoiled. And she went through severe penance—fasting and prayer—to purify herself.

I am alarmed at the strictness of the order. I tell my interpreter-nun so. She smiles. "We are used to self denial," she says. "We have chosen to live the life of penance to find God and salvation, you see", she explains. Why did you choose this life? I ask. "Different people choose for different reasons," she replied. "Poverty or grief is one reason: too much of riches—too good a life is another (our Saint Mahavir is an example of that, she adds)—and knowledge that the world is 'Maya'—a dream, is a third reason. I personally felt that life was not worth living, it was a trap, designed to corrupt the pure mind of humans with its empty bubbles, so I decided to spend my life seeking the Divine," she says. She took her *Deeksha* after her Matric, after undergoing the compulsory one year's training under a Guruji.

Is it not difficult to be away from your relatives? I ask. 'No'—she answers emphatically. "I have voluntarily broken away from all attachments. Even if my mother came to visit me I'd only feel inclined to give her my blessings, not go home with her. We are above ordinary householders," she adds. "We are a step nearer God."

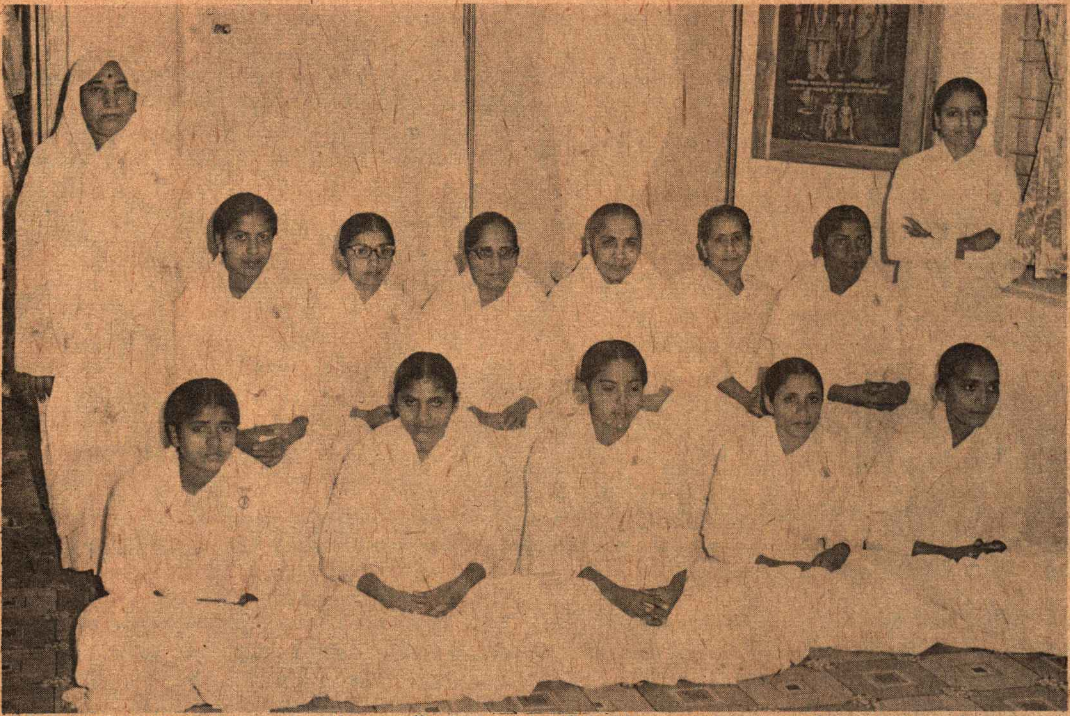
As my visit concludes, I borrow a few photos of her. "Return them only if you must," Abhay Shriji says, "whatever we have is not ours, so you can keep the photos if you wish to."

I thank her, and walk away, pondering over the facts I learn from some other ladies present at the time of my interview. The nuns don't cut their hair, I am told—they pluck it out themselves by the root every 6 months. Such rigidness is super-human! Yet the nuns feel no sense of sacrifice, only joy, I am told. We feel only *Anand*, no *Kasth*, Samay Yagna had said—she was sincere in saying so. And yet, was such self-denial rewarding? Did it serve any purpose? Was the *Anand* the mind gained worth the *Kasth* the body suffered?

In seeking for answers, I have stumbled against new questions.

* * *

"I BECAME a nun because I felt the call to serve my fellow men", Sister Immaculata A.C. says, her voice soft and firm. "Till I was 15 or 16, I never thought of becoming a nun. Then



"And dedicated Brahmakumaris all in a row"—the inmates of the Nagpur Ashram pose for a photograph.

I read the life of St. Theresa and felt strongly inclined to serve God. Of course my family was surprised. My father, who was in South Africa then, was so annoyed he did not write to me for 2 years. Only my mother's quiet persuasion softened him and he finally gave me permission. Of course he was disappointed. I was the eldest child and he had plans of his own for me; it hurt him to think he had perhaps not done enough to keep me satisfied," How does he feel now, I ask. She smiles brightly: "Now he is glad, seeing me so happy and fulfilled."

Sister Immaculata is a young woman, with a no-nonsense air about her. She looks me squarely in the eye, and answers my questions, one by one. She wanted a purely Indian Congregation, so left a School of Italian Sisters, to join the order she presently belongs to. She believes in Indianness—"which is why I wear a Sari", she points out. (Nuns are now allowed to wear a Sari instead of a habit.)

Yes, the first years were tough. She missed her family terribly. As a Novice, she felt miserable often; having to fight her will to rebel, to assert herself was difficult. "But", she adds, "I was prepared for the fight. I never thought of giving it up." Now, she is happy, "teaching serving, praying."

A Catholic nun has fixed times for prayer. She can choose to serve too. Sister Immaculata nods in thought when I ask her whether prayer does not become mechanical when forced. "It does", she admits bravely—"but we are seeking an ideal state where we can communicate with God. We are still human, you know, though we are nuns. So we are still striving for—the ideal state." We talk some more. I discover that Sister L, who is also present, has an interesting background too. "Long long ago when I was a child I wanted to become a nun," Sister L says. She speaks in a rush, words tumbling one upon another. "I studied in a Convent, and was very influenced by the nuns who taught me. But my parents asked me to wait and finish school before I took the step. I did so. And half way through college, I changed my mind and decided to become a doctor. But admission to the Grant Medical College where I could get a seat, proved costly. My father has 4 daughters and he had to provide dowries for all! So I took up Microbiology. A job with Glaxo's followed."

"What a life I led," she said reminiscently, "dances, dates, parties plus enough money to spend. But right in the middle of this, the old forgotten urge to serve others came on. I felt my life was empty. I planned to join an order which specialized in medical work. But I met the sisters of this Order when I went to visit my eldest sister who was already a nun at that time. Somehow I felt at home and joined this Order. And now–she paused–"after a terrible breaking-in period, I am supremely happy." Sister L is at present in a senior post in the Mt. Carmel School her order runs in Nagpur. "Please don't mention my name", she says, "or my students will pester me to distraction!"

"There's no question of going back," she says, "though there are a few who drop out. With me, this is my chosen way of life."

Sister Immaculata chimes in, "A nun's life is like any other dedicated life. We are all individuals, with different backgrounds, with very human likes and prejudices–only, we follow strict rules of poverty, obedience and chastity, to help us serve our fellowmen better, and to help us be nearer to God. After all, if we were married and had families, we might find little love to spare for the unknown unloved." That's a point well made, I say, and walk away from the quiet parlour with its soft-toned pictures of Christ and Mary.

* * *

ON ANOTHER DAY, in another place–a room decorated with garishly coloured pictures showing the imminent end of the world and the only path to salvation–Brahmakumari Pushpa Rani echoes Sister Immaculata's words. "If I had married I'd be bound by worldly ties, and would have forgotten my creator," she says.

Brahmakumari Pushpa Rani has been involved in teaching the Yoga of Salvation since she joined the organization 21 years ago. The Brahmakumaris are convinced the end of "Kaliyug" is at hand, and only their sect, which recognizes the real God, will be saved for a better life. They are thus involved in persuading the blind millions to join their ranks, to resort to prayer, to meditate, to give up carnal pleasures; and to refrain from vices like eating onions, drinking liquor etc. One can be Brahmakumari even while living a normal family life–if a married life where meditation replaces sex can be called normal. But to become one like Pushpa Rani, it is necessary to join the Ashram with the permission of one's parents and dedicate one's life to teaching the philosophy of the Order.

Brahmakumari Pushpa Rani's face is matt with face powder, her eyes glisten with kohl, but she is a nun. No worldly possessions, strict discipline, chastity are practised by her and her sister nuns. Why did you join, I ask. "We all join because we are aware of the truth of the philosophy we preach," she replies. "No one can join our order to run away from the world. We live in the world, are of it, and our duty is to help the ignorant find the correct way."

* * *

Five women. Each one of them has a different background. They follow different religions, different philosophies. But each of them is bound by the spirit of service, of self denial and sacrifice. Each has broken bonds of family and home. The reasons may be different–mental peace for the Jain nuns, service for the Christian nuns–but the end is the same, to find God.

How do the families of such women react to their lives? I talk to Cissy Pitts, a Gazetted Officer in the Maharashtra State Government to find out. Cissy's eldest sister was a nun–her parents had always desired to give a child to the Church, and young Theresa was inspired by this desire to join a convent. For 23 years Sister Mary Magdalen (as Theresa was renamed) served her fellowmen and God first as a teacher then as a headmistress. She was a model nun–ever thinking of others before herself. In 1959, illness struck. Sister Magdalen stoically worked on despite it. Till, in 1965, her body, racked by fever and pain, broke down. "Often she must have felt like coming home, where she could be tended with care", Cissy says, "but somehow she never did come. She stayed on. And when at last the end was near, and she was dying, we were called to visit her. She was ill, desperately sick but her face was peaceful", Cissy recalls. "And her last words to me were–'I'm glad I remained with the sisters. I'm glad I led a nun's life, I'm at peace.' "

"Not every one can do it, you know," Cissy tells me, after a brief silence. "I personally would never have made a good nun. The poverty, the sacrifice, is tolerable. But the giving up of one's will is the most difficult. Only the rich in spirit can realize that God and Duty come before Self.

"Only the great can lead their one precious life for the sake of others. And only they can realize how sweet are the rewards of such sacrifice."

I agree with her. And feel at peace.

I have found the answer to all my questions.

THE END

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Evaluating the man and his music, some have said that Franz Liszt the man was greater than his music. Both man and music were deserving of superlatives, but the man perishes, his music endures. . .

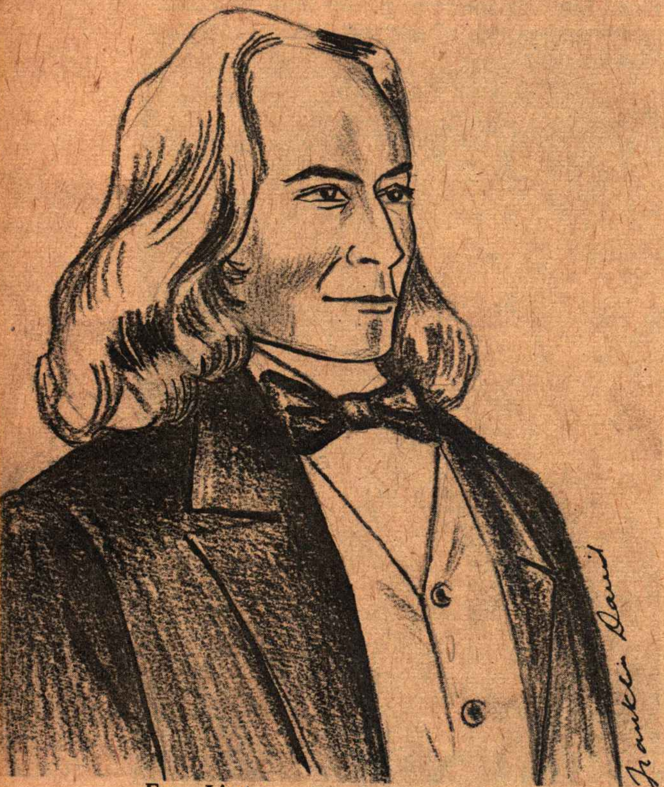
DEAR AND GLORIOUS FRIEND

By E. Das Ernest

YEARS AGO the New Zealand pianist Richard Farrell gave a concert at the Town Hall, Bangalore. It was an appreciative audience and the applause was thunderous and subsided only when Farrell bowed himself back to the grand piano. He was very gracious about it and allowed the auidence to choose what he was to play as the encore piece. About thirty voices cried in unison "Liebestraum!". It was not surprising. "Liebestraum" is one of the most beautiful, most moving pieces of music ever written. And the world of music pays enduring homage to the man who composed it and a repertoire of several other masterpieces, Franz Liszt.

Piano virtuoso without peer, composer par excellence, champion of the underdog (notably of the then struggling, up and coming composer Richard Wagner), authoritative writer on music and musicians, a man who could by his sheer presence send feminine hearts aflutter–yes, Franz Liszt (1811-1886) was all this and more. Evaluating the man and his music, some have said that the man was greater than his music. This view overlooks one important fact. Both man and music were deserving of superlatives, but the man perishes, his music endures.

Liszt was born October 22, 1811 at Raiding, Hungary. Adam Liszt, the father, was a Hungarian who married an Austrian-German. Adam, an amateur musician himself, gave Franz his first lessons. The youngster's rapidly developing talent so attracted the notice of several noblemen of Hungary that they created a fund of about Rs.1100/- per annum to help with their protege's studies in Vienna and Paris. He made his debut at the age of eleven and soon after started composing. The most distinguished member of the audience at his second concert in Vienna in 1823 was Ludwig van Beethoven who, after the concert, embraced Liszt in public.



Franz Liszt

Following this, Liszt accompanied by his father, undertook a series of concert tours of French provinces, Switzerland and England. In 1827 he lost his father. Liszt now started teaching in Paris. He was also showing that virtuosity which was to make him the greatest pianist of his day, a position he held as long as he chose to appear in public, which was for nearly 20 years. To him goes the credit for the concept of a recital by a solo artiste and he was the first pianist to play an entire programme from memory.

Three things took Liszt to the pinnacle of keyboard virtuosity. Firstly there was his own native talent and innate drive towards perfection. Secondly, he was fascinated by Paganini's wizardry with a violin, which made him practise as perhaps no other pianist had ever practised before. He created on the piano equivalents for Paganini's effects and further transcribed his violin caprices for the piano. Thirdly, he was tremendously impressed by Hector Berlioz's "Symphonie Fantastique" which the latter liked to describe as 'An episode in the life of an Artist'. Liszt transcribed this work also for the piano. Incidentally, years later in 1857, he dedicated his "Faust Symphony" to Berlioz.

Liszt had early shown a leaning toward the church and in his youth was often torn between his music and a desire to take holy orders. To the lover of music the fact that music took precedence must seem felicitous. That his music also drew him towards more worldly propensities was inevitable and acceptable as part of the development of the man and his genius, to all but the bigoted. Women in his audiences went into raves as much over the handsome man with the regal bearing as over his superb pianoforte technique.

In 1834 he met Countess Marie Catherine Sophie De Flavigny D'Agoult, a famous French writer and close friend of George Sand, Chopin's lover. They eloped and till 1840 lived in semiseclusion in Switzerland and Italy. They had three children one of whom, Cosima, married the pianist and conductor Hans von Bulow and was later to marry Wagner.

The years with the Countess were marked by intensive study and occasional appearances at Geneva, Milan, Florence, Rome and Paris. The years 1839-40 saw Liszt at the height of his popularity. At Vienna he was invested with the patent of nobility by the Emperor of Austria and at Budapest Hungarian magnates presented him with a sword of honour.

The next eight years he toured all Europe acquiring riches both in money and fame. He was generous with both. He completed at his own expense the Beethoven statue at Bonn. It was unveiled at a musical festival conducted by Liszt and the German violinist and composer Ludwig Spohr. In his time he lent his support to many of his contemporaries—Brahms, Berlioz and most notably Wagner. His transcriptions helped to reveal the beauty of the then little-known works of Beethoven and Bach.

LISZT'S second romance was with the Princess Carolyne zu Sayn Wittgenstein and from 1848 to 1861 he lived with her in Weimar. These were fruitful years during which he wrote articles of enduring value on the works of Berlioz, Wagner, Schumann, Schubert and Chopin. He was at the height of his creative genius and during this period wrote the bulk of his orchestral and choral pieces including his unforgettable Hungarian Rhapsodies and the Faust Symphony.

In 1849, Wagner, caught in the middle of the revolution that swept Europe, hurriedly had to leave Dresden and fled to Weimar. Liszt was just then producing Wagner's "Tannhauser". Hidden in a box, Wagner had the privilege of watching a rehearsal. However, realising that the only safe place for a person under orders of arrest was Switzerland, Liszt helped Wagner and his wife to find refuge there. Now his efforts on behalf of his exiled friend culminated in the first performance under his direction, of "Lohengrin" in August 1850, closely followed by other Wagnerian masterpieces.

The call of the Church which he had consciously or unconsciously kept muffled over the years was no longer to be denied. In 1861, Liszt went to Rome. The Princess Wittgenstein had matrimony on her mind. Understanding the situation, Cardinal Hohenlohe ordained Liszt at a quiet ceremony and he was thereafter known as the Abbe Liszt.

Liszt now devoted himself to the writing of religious music and composed the oratorios "The Legend of St. Elisabeth" and "Christus", the Hungarian Coronation Mass and several liturgical works.

In 1862, Wagner was granted an amnesty and returned to Germany. . .

It sometimes happens that a man and a woman meet in formal if cordial circumstances. There is no reason to suppose that anything more was said than was meant nor that anything more was meant than was said. But then the blueprint for the future is already on the drawing boards of the two minds and it is one that overlays tradition, loyalty, religion and all those safeguards governing human relationship. . .

Liszt's daughter Cosima and her husband, pianist and conductor Hans von Bulow had, during their honeymoon, called on Wagner in exile in Switzerland. Bulow was a close friend of both Liszt and Wagner. Looking upon the twenty year old Cosima, tall, slender, with her father's fine features, Wagner was smitten. On her part Cosima found the fiery Wagner overwhelming and never forgot that meeting.

It was five years before they met again in Bavaria. Wagner was a widower now. They looked into each other's eyes but no word was spoken–yet. Two years later, in 1869, Wagner set himself up in Munich under the patronage of King Ludwig II. He invited Bulow to join him as his assistant. This time Cosima realised what this would mean. Her marriage to Bulow had not been a very happy one, but she had no doubt that to leave him would be to break him. Perhaps what weighed even more on her mind was the prospect of destroying the friendship between her father whom she deeply loved and Wagner. But, having dwelt upon all the contra-indications, Cosima did not hesitate. The crisis was precipitated when, owing to a Court intrigue, Wagner had to move temporarily to Switzerland. Cosima went with him. Liszt faced what was perhaps the major crisis of his life. But, being Franz Liszt he had not, when he donned the cassock, shed that understanding of human nature, that magnanimity of spirit that had always marked him. . .

Wagner married Cosima in 1870. In 1872 after surmounting many difficulties, Wagner completed his Festival Theatre in Bayreuth. He sent his invitation to Liszt for the dedication ceremony. "You came into my life as the greatest man to whom I ever used the intimate speech of friendship. . ." wrote Wagner, "Come home, for it is yourself that you will find here." The invitation reached Liszt too late for the function. Nevertheless, he went. He travelled light. Having renounced all his wealth and possessions, he appeared at "Villa Wahnfried"*, Wagner's home, a basket in his hand. . .

The days of separation were over. The reunion was blissful and complete. . .

Liszt spent the winter months in Rome and the summer in Weimar where he had a number of pupils to whom he gave free lessons. From 1876 up to his death ten years later, he also taught for a term each year at the Hungarian Conservatory at Budapest.

He spent the Christmas of 1882 with Cosima and Wagner in Venice where the couple had to go owing to Wagner's failing health. Early in January 1883 Liszt took leave of them. That was his last farewell for, a month later, Wagner died of a stroke.

In April 1886 Liszt visited England and was accorded a warm and enthusiastic welcome. In July the same year, against his doctor's orders he travelled to Bayreuth. He had promised Cosima that he would attend the performance of Wagner's opera "Tristan and Isolde". A promise to Cosima was a bond given to Wagner as well. At the theatre, Liszt had to be carried to Wagner's box. Shortly afterwards he collapsed. Nearing midnight on the 31st July 1886, Wagner's "dear and glorious friend" Franz Liszt, with the word "Tristan" on his lips, passed on. . .

THE END

*** Villa Wahnfried was destroyed during World War II.**

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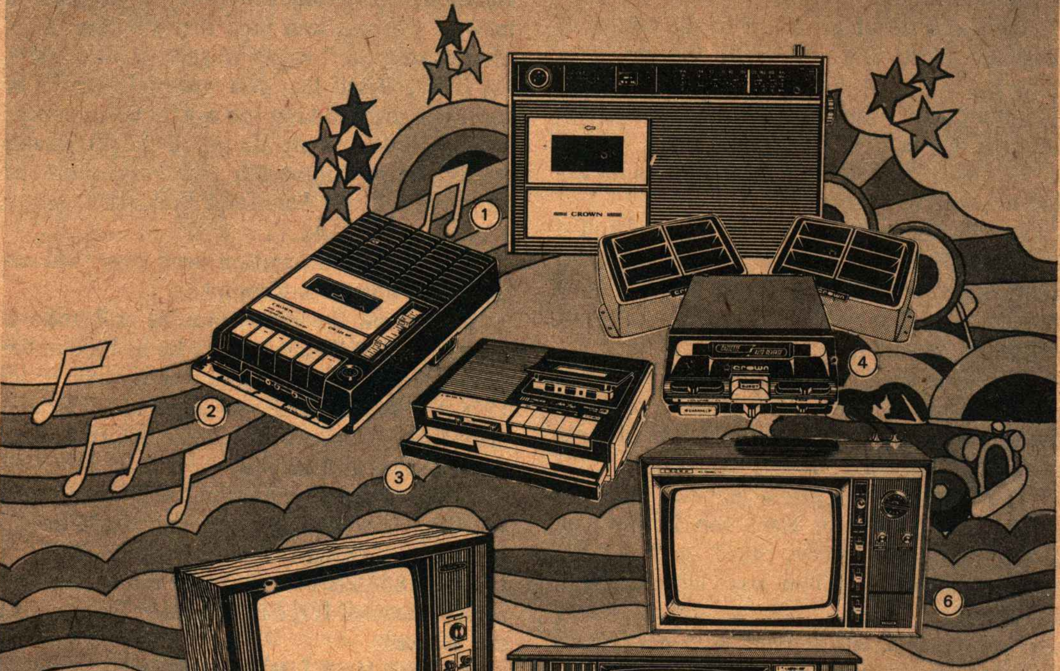

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If only most astrological predictions came true, the world would be a perfect place for each one of us! Still, it is better to travel than to arrive, and we must be grateful to astrologers for giving us something to look forward to. . . . And horoscopes can be fun! . . .

ANNUAL FORECAST: 1978

By Bejan Daruwalla

MAJOR planetary transits for 1978: Jupiter remains in Gemini till April 11, shifts to Cancer then till September 5, and for the remaining months of the year will be in Leo; Saturn moves out of Leo on July 26, and starts its sojourn in Virgo; Rahu or Dragon's Head remains in Libra till July 17, for the remaining months of the year, reversing in Virgo; Neptune and Uranus will be in Sagittarius and Scorpio, respectively, the year round. Mars remains in Leo for an unusually long period this year, namely January 1 to January 25, and once again from April 11 to June 13.

On this factual data of the major planetary transits, we are going to assess and evaluate how 1978 will be for you.

ARIES: *March 21 to April 21:* The salient features for impulsive, hard-driving, reckless Arians are:

a) a reaching out to people and places in April, June, December,
b) focus on home, property, house, parents, the domestic scene, in-laws, sites for factory/industry in July and January,
c) romance, speculative luck, official engagement or marriage, alliances and link-ups in October, December. This last influence spreads out well into 1979, to be precise from May to September, as Jupiter will then be in the 5th angle of creativity, children, sports and entertainment. The 5th angle in the solarscope is powerful and auspicious, specially for the events and happenings mentioned above.

The long stay of Mars in Leo – Mars is the ruling planet or the main significator of Arians—gives a rocket-thrust to the activities of Arians. Mars signifies courage, enthusiasm, and the ability to pack a punch in one's endeavours. Therefore, Arians will achieve their objectives. February, April and June are pointers in this direction.

There's a fly in the ointment! Saturn, sure-footed and slow, crawls into Virgo, the 6th angle of the solarscope for Arians, in late July. It means a change in the nature of employment for Arians, health hazards, enmity with colleagues and those under them. A chop and change of servants is foretold. Saturn will be in the 6th angle till October 1980. This year, it will particularly affect Arians born between March 21 to April 3. The astro message very specially for these Arians is: get your facts straight if intending a job-switch, take extra care of your health, get everything down in black and white if taking a loan, handle servants, colleagues and pets with tact and understanding. September is the key-month for it, and so is November.

The lucky gem for the Arian is the diamond; red and all warm colours are meant for him/her; the auspicious number is 9 and its series, for example, 18, 27, 36 and so on; an iron key is the best talisman, as iron is their metal; in matters of health the hazards are—headaches and accidents, insomnia, stomach ailments and malfunction of the kidneys.

TAURUS: *April 20 to May 21:* For dogmatic, rock-steady, kind-hearted and artistic Taurans, good news! Saturn will be moving out from their 4th angle of house, home, health and property in July, and tensions of the last 2 years will ease considerably. Taurans will feel free to carry out their plans, say a house-shift, buying/ selling of property, taking a journey, signing important contracts and instruments of negotiation.

The middle months of the year, particularly July and September, also May, find you full of plans for a trip, a new venture, renovation in the home, and if artistically inclined (most Taurans are), you should hit the high-spot! Saturn's stay in Virgo from July 26, 1978 to October 1980, should fructify your efforts. Marriage and alliances, birth of children, is confidently foretold.

What I wish to emphasise is that Taurans are the builders and the producers of the world. This urge to construct and channelise their energies, and these are considerable as Taurans have stamina, will find a ready outlet from July 1978. Their dogged determination to succeed will also help, as character is destiny.

The first four months of the year are noteworthy for promotion, a fatter pay-packet, an ability to hit it off with colleagues and teammates. It is quite possible that Taurans have changed jobs in the second-half of 1977. If not, this is the answer.

Partnerships are a prominent feature of the year. Uranus-Jupiter happy formation this year, could lead to a collaboration, a major alliance. A very profitable contract will be signed. Relatives and brothers and sisters could also feature in it. If Taurans are appearing for an interview, or holding a meeting or a conference, they will come out well on top. July best for it.

A note of warning please. The red signal is up for their parents and in-laws till June 1978. Property disputes are also likely in the first half of the year. If possible, they should reserve their best efforts at reconciliation in the second half of the year, that is, July and onwards.

Any project or plan launched in July or September, the two best bets for these children of Venus, will have a long-range effect. The prospects will be pleasing as well as profitable.

The turquoise is their very special gem; the number 6 and its series, lucky; all shades of blue are auspicious; the spade their very own talisman; and, in flowers, the rose and the violet should be worn. Their months of power are—January, March, July, September.

GEMINI: *May 22 to June 21:* For versatile, restless, curious Geminians, the year holds promise of wealth, domestic comforts, trips galore. They will be communicating fast and furious with people who matter.

The first four months, Jupiter remains in their sun-sign, boosting their confidence, helping them to get through to people. In February and April, they should make an all-out effort to put their ideas and campaigns across to other people. People will pay heed and say a big "yes".

A pay hike and/or money through rentals or mortgage or lease is foretold in July and January Joint-finances are likely to make their bank coffers really rattle. A legacy, a windfall, is predicted for them.

Dragon's Head or Rahu (this Node always moves backwards!) slides into Virgo on July 18. As Saturn will also be in Virgo from July 26, a sea-change in the domestic set-up is imminent. Though this might prove upsetting at first, the end-result will be a happy one. Therefore, accept the changes with equanimity, sure in the knowledge that things will ultimately go your way. Health-wise, however, September, November and December could pose a few problems. The Geminian weak points in health are: susceptibility to colds, chills, asthma, and pleurisy; pain in the limbs and trouble with the feet.

The last four months of the year, you go places in more senses than one! Geminians who miss out on it, have a second and much more sweeping chance in 1979! Your astrologer is very confident that you will travel far and wide, fan out to people magnificently, sell an idea or an item, and win kudos.

Wear garnets for concentration and good luck; remember the number 5 and its series is fortunate for you folks; cultivate self-confidence please; move fast in February, April, June August and October, and I am sure you will come out a winner. All bright colours are meant for you.

CANCER: *June 22 to July 22:* Cautious, conservative and tenacious Cancerians have it made in 1978! In astrology, Jupiter is at peak power in the sign Cancer, and this year, Jupiter will be in this sign from April 12 to September 5. Commonsense therefore dictates that you should plan your major move then. Plan with the planets and grab at what you want!

Jupiter in Cancer is the harbinger of fame and fortune, very specially in matters pertaining to: a) employment, b) journeys, c) publicity boosts d) marriage and alliances, e) ceremonies and conferences, f) sports and speculation, g) creative pursuits, child-birth and children, romance and lottery, h) research and religion.

As Saturn-Rahu combine will be in your puissant 3rd angle of courage, valour, relatives and education from July 26, it is absolutely clear that you will be striking out on your own, either in business or profession. A zest for living will be manifest. The ability to think clearly and come to the right decision, should make for happiness and good money!

At the same time, let me clarify that you will reach peak potential only in and after April. The first 3 months, there will be heavy expenses. You might have to look after those less fortunate than yourself. Matters might not move to your complete satisfaction. So, take it easy. Learn to relax, though I know it is difficult for security-conscious Cancerians.

The last 4 months of the year are tailor-made for an influx of money, happiness in the home, family gatherings, rewards for services rendered. By the year's close therefore, there should be a smile on your lips and a light of joy in your eyes, a bounce in your step!

Pearls and rubies are meant for you; Monday, Thursday your days of power; the Scarab, the sacred beetle of Ancient Egypt, your talisman; pastel shades your lucky colours. Those with foreign connexions do wonderfully well too!

LEO: *July 23 to August 23:* Proud, domineering and magnanimous Leons find their place in the sun towards the close of the year. From their birth-month, they will notice a marked improvement in their affairs. The astrological reasons are: a) the last 4 months of the year, Jupiter will be well set, just like batsman Gavaskar, in their sun-sign, (b) Saturn will leave their sign in late July, thus giving them a very welcome breather. Saturn was in their sign the last 2 years, and was therefore the culprit responsible for their tensions and tribulations.

The first four months of the year, despite Saturn's evil eye, they will form alliances and ties, as Jupiter will be in Gemini, their 11th angle of friends and promotion. April could rake in gains and wish-fulfilment.

Wedding bells ring loud and clear for you this year! Though Leo is rather slow to change or mend his ways, he/she will be very much on the move this year. There will be a willingness to take chances. This should pay handsomely.

As Mars remains in your sign from April 11 to June 13, it should give you pep and go. You should have the drive and the ambition to carry a project through. The period from April 12 to April 23, and the first 13 days of June are best.

The middle months of the year, very specially around July and September, will be noteworthy for expenses. It will be for a good and noble cause, though. Home and travel are highlighted then. Perhaps it indicates a house-warming.

1978 ends in a blaze of glory for Leons! The best part of it all is that anything they launch after October 1978 will have a spin-off in June 1979.

Lucky colours: gold, white, yellow, orange, Lucky days: Sunday and Monday. Gems: ruby and diamond. Talisman: a small heart-shaped locket in their fortunate metal, gold. Best months: first twenty days of April, June, August, October and December.

VIRGO: *August 24 to September 22:* Astrologers must have scared the daylights out of meticulous, industrious and fastiduous Virgoans, with their prediction of Saturn's lash hitting them hard and handsome! Not to worry overmuch please. It is not as bad as all that. Here's why: a) Saturn ingresses or enters your sun sign only on July 26, b) Jupiter, the Great Benefic, will be in your 11th angle of gains, wish-fulfilment, ties and friendship, promotion and pelf from April 12 to September 5, c) Uranus the year round pulls for you from the 3rd angle of trips, enterprises and endeavours.

The Saturn sway will really start for you only around December this year. You see, Saturn takes time to accelerate, pick up momentum. Also, only those of you born between August 24 to September 6 come directly under the influence of Saturn this year. Melancholia, depression, disappointments in love and job matters are the legacies of Saturn for you. But if your individual horoscope is strong, these aspects could be minimised. The personal observation of this astrologer is that Saturn often plays havoc with the health and the psyche of a person. While fate is inexorable, a determined, rational approach to problems and the vicissitudes of life does help. So do not take a fatalist attitude. Fight back with all you have. If you believe in prayer, visit the temple of Hanuman every Saturday and Tuesday. Give alms to the lame, the old and the lepers, according to your capacity. Feed the poor and the needy.

This year, your good months are: January, May, July, September. Plan out in such a way that you are at peak performance then. This should not be so difficult, as Virgoans are perfectionists and can chalk out a campaign with care and concentration. It is here that your sense of discrimination and analysis can really help you.

The first four months of the year, Jupiter moves in your 10th angle of prestige and power, parental affairs and professional pursuits. So, start cracking immediately. Get on with your work–fast. Remember, it all depends upon your efforts. If you strive with might and main till April, it is absolutely certain that you will consolidate your position and your finances, as Jupiter operates in your favour till your birth-month. In May, July, September Uranus also favours the launching of new enterprises and projects. If this involves a trip, a journey, a visit, so much the better!

Your lucky talisman is the bamboo and the serpent. Remember, this bamboo must have seven knots. Bright blue or yellow flowers are auspicious, but not those which are pink or red. Fortunate colours are: yellow, orange, white.

LIBRA: *September 23 to October 22:* Refined, sophisticated and vacillating Librans should be in their element in 1978. Publicity campaigns and journeys, the first four months; a new high in business/profession the next six months; and towards the close, a minor wish-fulfilment comes their way. Let's work out the details now.

On February 20, Jupiter regains direct motion, making for a big upwards thrust in matters connected with trips, correspondence, contacts, liaisons, ceremonies, the arts very specially. As Venus, the planetary indicator of Librans will also be in their 9th angle, the first 13 days of February, a grand reaching out to people is predicted. Turn on the famous Libran charm to win the hearts of the people! It should pay handsomely.

In August, both Mars and Venus will be in their sun-sign, leading to peak-level performance, gains, socialising, a new high in status and position, resulting in a feeling of well-being. August should mark the apex, career or profession-wise.

Saturn shifts to the 12th angle in late July, and it is associated with expenses, isolation, enmity, losses. But this year at least, this influence will not be marked, as Jupiter also moves over to a very favourable position, namely the 11th angle of gains and friendship in September. Therefore, the good and the bad influences nullify each other. At the most, Librans will find a money-squeeze, or rather, despite earning well, will find that money flies out of the window quickly and easily! Enemies, try as they will, will not succeed in harming them. Only those Librans born between September 23 to October 7, will be under the evil 'eye' of Saturn this year.

As Neptune will be in a happy formation with Jupiter in October and December, travels and romance come under happy stars. A marriage around June 1979, could have its first seeds or beginnings in October/December, this year.

Pluto, the year round in Libra, could bring a revolutionary change in the lives of those Librans born between October 7 to 12. These changes will be in their personal lives, partnerships at all levels, health. A shake-up is likely.

The opal is associated with Librans; copper is their lucky metal (it is that of Taurans also); and the entire series of 3, 6, 9, is auspicious for them. In 1978, their puissant months will be: first twenty days of February, June, July and August, October and December.

SCORPIO: *October 23 to November 22:* For high-powered, passionate and determined Scorpios, 1978, July and onwards marks a turning-point, a sudden and swift veering of direction, which could well lead them to the top! A busy, bustling time is therefore confidently predicted.

Scorpios will actually feel this forward motion in their activities and plans and campaigns from April 11 or so, as Jupiter ingresses their all-powerful 9th angle of fate, and favour. This (9th angle) is a very strong and sure positioning for Jupiter and those Scorpios connected in any way with shipping, high finance, architecture, politics, publishing, export-import, trade and commerce, showmanship and publicity by any media, will zoom to the apex!

Helping them all the way from September, latest, will be twosome alliance of Saturn-Dragon's Head, positioned in the 11th angle of Scorpios. The pay-off will be—consolidation of position, victory over rivals, solid gains, powerful alliances, the realisation of cherished hopes and desires. Mark you, Saturn and Dragon's Head are there for a long stay, and therefore, the full impact will be spread out for a minimum of a year and a half, as Dragon's Head stays put in one sign for that span. As Saturn will be there till 1980 October, Scorpios are definitely heading for power and glory. Their awesome determination and intensity is another plus point. This astrologer reiterates: September and after, there's no stopping them!

The first four months are, however, not auspicious for them. Finances will need extra care, issues of loans and funds will have to be settled, and health is suspect. Rash impulses will have to be controlled with an iron will. It won't pay to fly off the handle at colleagues and those working under them.

The Scorpio tendency to hit back hard will also have to be restrained. A little tact will bring in a lot of friends and well-wishers to the fold. Avoid laying down the law in 1978, though this will be difficult and irksome.

In 1978, the good months will be the first twenty days of: Janary, March, July, September, November.

The planetary ruler assigned to Scorpios by modern astrologers is Pluto. Scorpios born between November 7 to 11 are definitely in for a major reshuffle in their personal affairs as well as professional pursuits. Pluto destroys the old order, giving place to new. These changes, willy-nilly, will be thrust on them!

The Scorpio talisman is the anchor of iron (you see Scorpio is a watery sign and their lucky metal, iron); the Scorpio, colours red, crimson, pink; the Scorpio gem is the bloodstone and the coral; usually the number 9 series is favourable for them.

SAGITTARIUS: *November 23 to December 21:* The year's close brings bucketfuls of money and well-deserved fame for sporty, frank, free-moving Sagittarians. That does not mean that the rest of the year will be a damp squib. Not by a long shot! It only means that your efforts will find culmination in October through December, 1978.

Also, 1979 sees you, enthusiastic and boisterour Sagittarians, latching on to the gains and lapping up the publicity which comes your way! Four factors are responsible for it: a) As Mars will be in your lucky 9th angle from April to June, as well as the first 25 days of January, an official engagement, marriage, trips and ceremonies are foretold, b) Saturn-Rahu in your 10th angle from late July augur well for profession/business/job. The snag here is that Saturn hurls from a height, if you use power ruthlessly and criminally. So, get wise in the use of power, c) Uranus-Jupiter fine juxtaposition in the middle months of the year, could open up the vein of legacies, windfalls, gains by property and land, insurance and funds, d) Jupiter-Neptune trine aspect (astrological term for a formation of two planets which are a hundred and twenty degrees apart) is always considered beneficial and inspirational. The actual and exact aspect will take place in 1979, but the benefits in terms of journeys, communication, contacts, success in interviews, conferences, politics and the arts, will be evident from October itself.

The sign Sagittarius is associated with law, religion, housing and the fine arts. It is in these four directions or fronts that you folks will make rapid headway. It is foretold that you will be spear-heading, or taking a very active and purposeful part at an important meeting or conference and win plaudits for yourself and the country!

Sagittarian colours are the same as those of Pisces, namely, purple, lilac, violet, mauve—but you have the additional advantage of putting on bright yellow and a dash of red; your talismans are the horse-shoe (your sign symbolises half-man, half-horse) and arrowheads of flint or tin (tin is associated with your planet, Jupiter); the number 3 and its series should prove lucky; and as you are more accident-prone than any other sign, extra care is essential, so watch your step! 1978 is your spring-board to fame and fortune!

CAPRICORN: *December 22 to January 19:* Wedding bells, financial jugglery, collaborations, journeys (long-distance) and research, are foretold for you, conservative, practical, ambitious children of the planet Saturn.

The focus is on alliances, very definitely. Jupiter will be transiting fast your 7th angle from April through September, and May, July, as well as the period from August 23 to September 5, is indicative of a tie, a union, Yes, it will turn out well!

The first three months of the year, and again from October through December, money matters will hold your interest and attention. If you are expecting a loan, or your finances have been blocked and held up, they will be released. Therefore, don't fret your heart out. August and onwards you will be out of the clamps of the money-squeeze! But health needs special care the first 6 months, as Mars will be moving in and out of your 8th angle. Accidents are a possibility.

Saturn in your 9th angle from July-end marks a period of evolution and slow but steady expansion. Saturn is also linked with spirituality, and therefore, for those so inclined, glimpses of God are certain. This, I agree, is a tall statement —and Capricorns always suspect big claims. But that's the way this astrologer sees it. This evolutionary period will last till October 1980, and this year, those of you born between December 22 to January 4 might experience the full impact of the blast. Religious ceremonies are foretold. Alas, the health of parents could cause acute concern and neurotic worry.

Help from unexpected or little known quarters is absolutely certain this year. A windfall should come your way around May, August and September, December. You people, normally, are careful in money matters and know how to get full value for it.

This year, research scholars, teachers, educationists, sales promotion and insurance officers, businessmen with a wide and varied distribution facility, dealers in medicine, oil, gas, and those who specialise in public relations, should get the most mileage out of the year.

You will be able to meet your financial commitments.

The colours for your are brown, grey, indigo; the sapphire is since time immemorial associated with Capricornians; though you people often make it the hard way, you end up with quite a pile! Lead is your lucky metal.

AQUARIUS: *January 20 to February 19:* Inventive, erratic and brilliant Aquarians get off to a headstart, overcome the opposition plaguing them the last 2 years, and end up very much in the limelight of publicity. Poor health could however bog them down this year.

Till mid-April, romance, marriage, speculative luck, and success in games of chance is predicted, as Jupiter moves back and forth in your 5th angle, associated with everything chancy. February, your birthmonth, could bring in the gravy too! Partnerships are not unlikely, though it would be better to wait till October and December for a permanent link-up.

Saturn moves out of your opposition angle in late July, and therefore after it you will not have to swim against the tide of public opinion. Personally, though, this shift of Saturn to the 8th angle after late July, I believe, will be responsible for health hazards, and unless you keep a hawk's eye on your finances; complications could set in. But this positioning of Saturn is certainly preferable to that of the opposition angle those last 2 years. Lesser of the two evils, would sum it up.

Your new planetary ruler by modern astrology, Uranus, and Jupiter the Great Benefic, will be pulling for you very strongly in July. Employed Aquarians go up a notch or two, and a job-switch could result in promotion as well as a fatter pay-packet! Also, you will find the boss and colleagues more co-operative in that month.

September-October, December, are fortunate for a grand alliance, as hinted earlier. Jupiter-Neptune in fine formation is the astro reason for it. You will be thrust before the public eye and image in a very prominent manner. Try not to fight shy of it!

Those with Governmental connections, or serving in large and well-established organisations, have a good chance to show their prowess, win plaudits, hit the scene in a very big way. This is a marked and distinct feature of the year. The period for it is the second-half of the year. So, note it well and work with a will. Give that something extra to whatever you do! Fate is with you, now.

The owl is the Aquarian talisman; the months of power are the first 20 days of February, April, June-July, October and December, aquamarine is your auspicious colour and the amethyst is said to bring or rather attract good fortune. You will have much to do with the number 4 and 8 series. Personally though, I prefer the number 1 series for Aquarians, specially as Jupiter will be in Leo from September 6.

PISCES: *February 20 to March 20:* A mixed grill for imaginative, psychic and nervous Pisceans! Your plan should be to go all out in May, July, January and November for your

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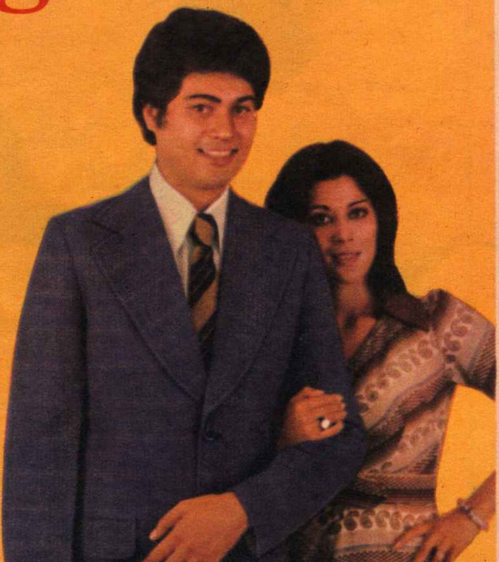

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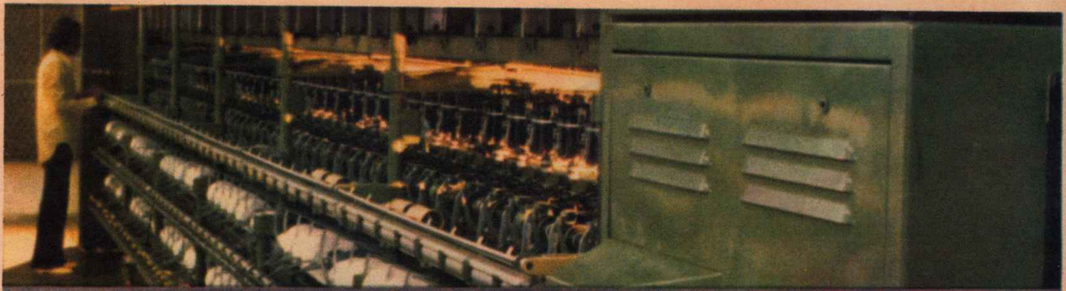

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heart's desire. Saturn's entry or ingress in your opposition angle from July 26, does mean that you will have to fight against criticism, and, as you are very sensitive, this will not be easy. The saving grace is that, in 1978, Saturn will affect mainly those Pisceans born between February 20 to March 4.

Many Pisceans will be tempted to plunge into matrimony and the best months for it are May, July, November. Jupiter's movement in Cancer, your 5th angle, is indicative of a happy ending in personal matters, namely unions, sports, lotteries, artistic pursuits. Children give joy and delight.

Towards the end of 1978, October and onwards that is, job prospects certainly look bright for Pisceans. This influence gathers momentum and force in 1979, as Jupiter will once again be in your 6th angle of work, service, health. The months for it in 1979 are: May to September. Jupiter in Leo will be in powerful and beneficial formation with Neptune, your planetary significator by modern astrology. Therefore I have stressed the employment angle for you.

The first four months of the year, and again in June, there's focus on home, property, parents, in-laws, the domestic scene in short. Plan a house-shift, buying/selling of property and vehicle, then. Renovation in house-office is likely. Despite Jupiter's retrograde motion till February 20, you will gain in these directions. April and June are best for a domestic reshuffle, though.

The bloodstone and topaz are your gems; the Sagittarian colours hold good for you too; the number 3 series always goes with Pisceans; water lily is your fortunate flower; in talismans, the fish and the curved key are ideal; health hazards are—asthma, foot trouble, poor blood circulation, chills. **THE END**

All about myself

The unbottled spirit's still restless
waiting for the orders
that mark the boundaries of its reach.
I envy those unhappy loners

who can compel their nightmares
to exhume their decomposed relations;
I've my blood-ties that place me where I am.
I've loved and hated like a man

who knew his obligations.
Dutifully, I've looked back
towards where I'd begun
to make sure that nothing was left behind
and nothing followed in my wake.

How the lone bird in the sky
has its flight for company!
The fish follows the silence
of the deep waters never to come back.
My emptiness is filled by the loneliness
of the individuals
who couldn't return to themselves.

Somehow, I must be a relation of mine —
one who has nothing to give to himself
must give others what they ask.

– Jayasudarshana

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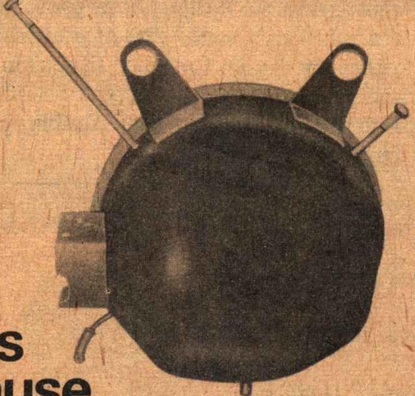

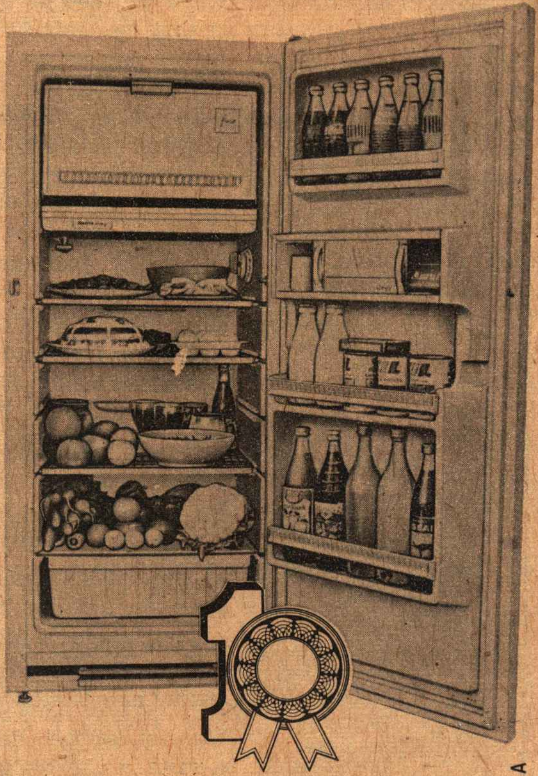

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REMINISCENCES OF THE NEHRU AGE

By M. O. Mathai

Preface

THIS BOOK is not history or biography, but chatty stuff containing my reminiscences. No doubt it contains historical and biographical data pertaining to a significant period of India's history.

When a number of friends urged me to write my reminiscences, I said "Either I shall write without inhibition or not at all." In writing this book I have been largely guided by the philosophy contained in the Introduction to Vol. V (1902) of his monumental thirteen-volume work, *Napoleon et sa Famille*, by Frederic Masson. He states:

"It is time to cease at last making this senseless distinction between the public man, whom history may claim and the private person in whom she has no right. There is only the human being; a person's character is indivisible like his nature. As soon as a man has played a historic part, he belongs to history. History lays her hand upon him wherever she happens to come across him, for there is no fact in his existence, however petty, no insignificant utterance of his sentiments, no microscopic detail of his personal habits which may not serve to make him better known. I am sorry for him if he has any vices, or abnormal inclination, or ugly sides to his nature, for history will tell; and also if he squints or is crippled, she will tell. She will collect his words, even those murmured in love. . . . She will question his mistresses as well as his physician, his valet and his confessor. If she is lucky enough to get hold of his cash-book, she will peruse it carefully and relate how his services were paid, how he enriched or ruined himself, what fortune he left behind him. She will lift his winding sheet, to see of what illness he died and what was his last emotion when confronted with eternity. From the day he attempted to play a part in history he delivered himself up to her.

"This is how history shall be, no longer either political or anecdotal, but human; no longer a chronological arrangement of dates and words, of names and facts, but something which will remind you of life itself; which gives off a smell of flesh and bone, the sounds of love and cries of pain, in which the passions play their part and from which may at last emerge the lineaments of men whom we can meet as brothers.

"What! Shall poetry be allowed to appropriate the right to express all the passions of humanity, drama to show them on the stage, fiction to reproduce them from the imagination, and shall history, condemned to wear for ever the harness of a false modesty and an assumed dignity, strangled in the swaddling clothes in which the traditions of a monarchical historiography have wrapped her up be obliged, if she will not be regarded as frivolous and incur the strictures of the sticklers for deportment and the Philamintes, to keep within polite generalities and to speak about human beings as she would about heavenly bodies, shall history, which records mankind,

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only be allowed by dint of dexterous circumlocutions, and of kindly suppressions, to suggest, in noble phrases, that this same mankind has known passion, love and sin? Political actions which had none but political motives—they do occur; but how rarely!"

I have also been guided by the exceptionally frank three-volume autobiography of Bertrand Russell.

Before I started writing this book, I suspended from my mind all personal loyalties of a conventional nature; only my obligation to history remained.

I have made no full-scale assessments of the historic persons with whom I came into close contact. It is for distinguished historians of the future to undertake that task.

If any reader feels aghast at some of the uninhibited disclosures in this book, I would like to refer him back to what is contained in this Preface.

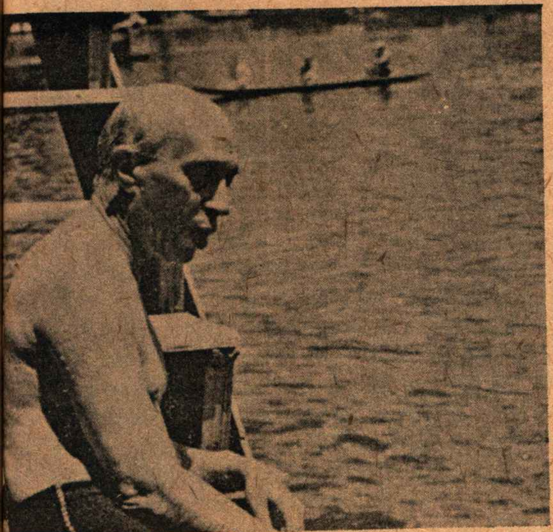
Madras M. O. MATHAI

Nehru and I

SOON AFTER NEHRU was released from prison in 1945 I wrote to him from Assam, where I was then, saying that I would like to join him in the service of the nation. His reply did not reach me because it was intercepted by the CID. I wrote him another letter. He replied promptly, and this time it reached me. His reply said that he was soon coming to Assam and that I might meet him then. He had specified the place, date and approximate time. I met him. We talked in generalities. He said life with him would be hard and uncertain. I told him about my only experience in politics which was in college. There were no Congress movements in Travancore. But during Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar's oppressive regime I organized a public demonstration by students, defying prohibitory orders. The police chief of the area came to the college with instructions to arrest the principal organizer of the demonstration. He interrogated many students but no one betrayed me. I also told Nehru that after taking my degree from Madras University I had to work because I did not like to run away from my obligations to my parents, brothers and sisters. I added that I was a bachelor and had no intention of marrying, and further that what I was looking for was a purpose in life and that I was prepared to live dangerously. Before I took leave of him, I said that within a month I would be leaving Assam for Travancore for a short visit to my parents. He asked me to visit him in Allahabad for a few days and stay in his house and have some leisurely talks with him. At our meeting, neither he nor I had any thought of a change of government in India, even though later it so happened that the change occurred in less than one year.

In December 1945, at Anand Bhawan, Nehru again talked in generalities. He talked about the bananas and coconuts and spices and lakes and lagoons of Kerala. I quoted to him a couplet from Kalidasa in support of the theory that Kalidasa was a Malayali: "*Yavani mukha Padma nam; thathra Kerala yoshitham.*" He laughed. He said that barring the grandeur of the Himalayas, Kerala was the most beautiful place in India. I reminded him that the Vindhyas and the Western Ghats were older than the Himalayas and that there were one or two towns in Travancore at an altitude of over 5,000 feet. I also told him that Agasthyakoodam (abode of the sage Agasthya) was in Kerala, and so was Maruthua Mala (Medicine Hill) which Hanuman brought from the Kumaon in the Himalayas and deposited in the Western Ghats. He did not know about these.

Before I was scheduled to leave Allahabad, Nehru told me, with a measure of sadness, about his inability to pay me anything and that he hated to spoil my future. I said I was in no need of money and, in order to satisfy him on this point, I disclosed to him the extent of my finances. He conceded that it was more than adequate. I told him that my future should be my own concern and gave him an inkling of my independence by saying, "in any event I am not available to work for a cause on payment." He scrutinized me and said that soon he was going to Malaya and would have liked me to accompany him on the trip as his



Nehru at Dal Lake, Srinagar.

secretary, but that I must go to my parents first. He advised me to be in Allahabad early in February 1946, just before his return from Malaya. On his Malaya trip he took with him as his secretary his brother-in-law, Gunotham Purushotham Hutheesing.

I left most of my things at Anand Bhawan and returned to Allahabad after seeing my parents as arranged. At home I discovered that my father had already divided the family properties and set apart the lion's share for me. By a registered deed I wrote away my claims to the family properties in favour of my brothers before I left the place. My father and mother were opposed to my joining Nehru because they thought I would be in jail soon. And so did I.

Soon after my arrival in Allahabad early in February 1946, Nehru returned from Malaya. I had already told him during my previous visit to Allahabad that only after a week of my being with him would I be in a position to say in what way I could be of any use. I took less than a week. I discovered that Nehru so far had not had any adequate secretarial assistance. He even had to file his own papers. Those connected with his books, royalties and general finances were in a hopeless mess. I told him that even a superficial assessment of the situation had convinced me that the best way I could be of help to him was to render him secretarial assistance and added that I had decided to do this disagreeable work for a year. He was immensely pleased. Although I did not tell him so, it was my intention to employ one person at my expense before the end of the year and train him to relieve me of the routine work. Soon Nehru was relieved of all this needless burden.

One day, in 1946, some Americans who knew me turned up at Anand Bhawan to have *darshan* (a meeting, an audience) of Nehru. On seeing me there, they yelled, "Hi Mac" in Nehru's presence. From then on, to Nehru and the members of his wider family I was Mac. The Mountbattens also picked it up later.

Soon we were caught up with the British Cabinet Mission in Delhi and Simla, then the AICC in Bombay, where Nehru took over as Congress President from Maulana Azad, and then negotiations with Viceroy Lord Wavell on the formation of the interim government. In between there took place an impulsive visit to Kashmir where we were arrested at the border. So I had the honour of sharing Nehru's last imprisonment; but it was for a brief period of about a week.

On 2 September 1946, the day the interim government was formed, Nehru took me with him to the External Affairs Department. In the evening I told him that I had no desire to work in government. I refused to go to office the next day; and stayed away from government till 15 August 1947. Nehru was annoyed with me. But there was plenty to do at his residence where I organized a compact staff chosen by me as part of his official secretariat. Thus I got rid of all my routine work. Most of Nehru's important work was done at the residence until the formation of the dominion government on 15 August 1947.

The two years, from September 1946, proved to be an extremely difficult and dark period. It was all work and very little sleep. There were innumerable nights when I had to keep awake without a wink. There were telephone calls throughout the night, mostly from Muslims under attack by savage mobs of refugees. Once, after midnight, I received news on the telephone that B. F. H. B. Tyabji's residence was under attack. I ordered a police jeep and a small police party from the security squad near our house at 17 York Road. Nehru, who was still working upstairs, heard the noise of the jeep and the policemen and came racing down. He asked me where I was going. I replied that there was no time to lose. He jumped into the jeep and I almost got crushed between him and the driver. In the jeep I explained the position to him. When we arrived at Badruddin Tyabji's place—Badr as he was known to me—we found Dewan Chaman Lall, who was staying in the next house, making a valiant effort to ward off the mob. Whatever were Chaman Lall's faults, he was a thoroughly non-communal person. On our arrival on the scene, the crowd bolted. We left after posting a small squad of security staff there. Badr, coming from an illustrious family which produced a Congress President, was shaken but not disheartened. He and Azim Hussain, who came from a distinguished family in West Punjab, had opted to serve in India. They are ICS men, now retired. They are as true patriots as Zakir Husain, who narrowly escaped murder. They and persons like Brigadier Usman, who lost his life defending Kashmir against Pakistani aggression, and Abdul Hamid, the lowly but brave soldier from UP, who earned the Param Vir Chakra posthumously in the 1965 war with Pakistan, are heroes who kept the faith. Only an ungrateful nation will fail to honour them.

In the summer of 1947 I received an anonymous telephone call at Nehru's residence to say that a Muslim girl was in danger in a small hostel in New Delhi. I took a pistol from the nearby police tent and got into a car which was driven by an old Muslim driver Khaliq who, as a young man, was in the service of Pandit Motilal Nehru. Khaliq, with his goatee, was not the man to be taken out; but no one else was available. In front of the girl's room sat a relatively young Sikh with a long sword and a menacing look. He looked at Khaliq with hatred in his eyes. He knew English fairly well. I asked him to get out of the place. He became aggressive and waved his sword at me. I took out my pistol and told him firmly, "If you don't get out, I will shoot the hell out of you." He fled. When he was safely away from Khaliq, I entered the hostel room and found a young girl sitting on her cot and shaking like a leaf. She was so petrified that she could not talk for a while. She was a Muslim girl from Nagpur and was working in the government. All her belongings were looted. She had one spare saree in a small box. I called Khaliq in so that she could see his goatee and feel reassured. I told her, "Don't be afraid, come with me." I took her in the car to Nehru's residence and put her in Indira's room; Indira was out of town. After a few days, when she was normal, we sent her under escort by air to Nagpur. Later I learnt that she returned to Delhi when the situation became normal and resumed her work in the government.

During those difficult days it was not always easy to get foodstuffs. Dewan Chaman Lall occasionally managed to send some eggs and mutton. Once our Goan steward, Cordiero, told me he could get a lamb and put the meat in the deep freeze. I asked him to do so. I was then doing the housekeeping as Indira was out of Delhi. Nehru heard about the lamb and got annoyed with me. He told me if I did it again he would refuse to eat the stuff. There was no need because I had already made standing arrangements with the controller of the Governor-General's household.

The saddest experience of my life was visits with Nehru to the undivided Punjab. We had to wade through the debris of destroyed houses and dead bodies of innocent people in Multan, Lahore and Amritsar. We witnessed the largest migration in history involving eighteen million people both ways. Some years later a friend asked me who were more cruel, Muslims or Sikhs? I replied, "Half a dozen of the one were equal to six of the other." Perhaps the Sikhs were one up; and the Hindus did not lag very much behind.

Early in August 1947 Nehru said that he would like me to help him in his secretariat also. I told him I hated files and that I did not know what other work I could do in the secretariat. He said I could feel my way about and work would come. He added, "From the 15th of this month it is going to be our own government; most of my work will be done in the secretariat and if you stay away you won't know what is happening. Apart from that, I do not want to be surrounded by officials completely." I reluctantly agreed. At Nehru's instance, Secretary-General Girja Shankar Bajpai at the External Affairs Department dropped in one evening on his way home and talked to me about my appointment in government. He said the idea was to designate me as Personal Private Secretary to the PM and that all papers for the PM would go through me. He added that I would be free to do such non-official work as the PM wanted me to. I said I did not want to be integrated into the secretariat; that my position should remain undefined as I proposed to create my own work in the secretariat eventually. I also laid down a condition that my appointment should be conterminus with that of the PM. All this was agreed to. He then said that Nehru had told him that my emoluments should be fixed only with my consent. He asked me what salary I wanted. I replied that I didn't need a salary. He said that in government it was not the usual practice to engage people without emoluments. I then said I would take Rs 500 per month and added that it should be an *ad hoc* salary, not in any grade. He was amused, thought I was a

Nehru, Indira and the kids Rajiv and Sanjay in Switzerland with the author, 1953.

crank, and reported all this to Nehru, who asked him not to make much variation upwards in the salary I had suggested. So Bajpai had my *ad hoc* salary fixed at Rs 750 per month without any further reference to me. It so happened that an official, who was designated as Assistant Private Secretary, was drawing almost double my "salary"; but it did not bother me because it never entered into my head that a man's usefulness was to be measured in terms of the salary he drew. I was never asked to undergo a medical examination. Neither was I asked to sign the oath of secrecy.

When the Finance Minister appealed for economy in non-productive governmental expenditure, I stopped drawing my salary for a whole year. Soon after that, something which happened annoyed me. The question arose about my travelling by train. The administration man in the PM's secretariat told me that I was entitled only to second class fare. I said I wouldn't travel second class and asked him to get me a third class ticket. This was reported to the PM. He ascertained that the minimum salary entitling a person to travel first class was Rs 1,500 per month and ordered that my salary be fixed at that figure as an *ad hoc* one. Simultaneously, at my instance, my official designation was changed to Special Assistant to the Prime Minister. At that time no one in government had that designation. I cancelled the trip and have never travelled by train on government account from that day onwards.

When N. R. Pillai became Cabinet Secretary, the PM asked him to keep in touch with me. Pillai sent me the personal files containing the efficiency reports of all the members of the ICS and other former Secretary-of-State services. He wanted me to read them as the background information would be useful to the PM. It took me over two months to go through them late at night daily. I was impressed by the objective reporting by senior Englishmen on their juniors—minus, of course, the political slant.

Ever since I started work in the PM's secretariat, no file or paper reached the PM except through me—with rare exceptions, in which case they would come to me from him. Nothing went out except through me. This meant matching hours of work with Nehru, and sometimes surpassing him. In the PM's house, generally, I ate alone in my study while working, sometimes at odd hours. I had come to the conclusion that the best way to help the PM was to inform his mind. For this I had to study specific issues and problems and get advice from those who were in a position to advise—people in government and outside. Except in its broad aspects, I was not particularly interested in foreign affairs which, in detail, meant international pillow-fighting. In fact, I used to call Krishna Menon an "international pillow-fighter."

After the death of Vallabhbhai Patel, much to my embarrassment ministers, MPs and senior officials used to refer to me as "Deputy PM," "Power behind the throne" and the like. C. D. Deshmukh, in his autobiographical book, chose to refer to me as "the most powerful acolyte of the PM." Except for a few, I had only contempt for ministers who were nothing but a bunch of mediocrities or worse.

It is true that no file or paper containing a recommendation, reached the PM without my comments on a slip or a routine note if I felt that such comment was called for. Such slips and "routine notes" never formed part of the files. They were removed when papers came down from the PM.

One morning, during the 1952 monsoon, I received a telegram as I was waiting to go to the office with the PM in his car. The telegram announced the death of my father who was eighty-four. I put the telegram in my pocket and, without betraying any emotion, went to office with the PM and did the day's work. No one knew about it. In 1950, when I visited my home in Kerala for a couple of hours, I had told my brothers and sisters that in case anything happened to my parents, they should not expect me to come over because, with the then rudimentary air services, there was no chance of my reaching home in time. Four days later, on a Sunday, as I returned from the office with the PM for lunch, N. K. Seshan handed me another telegram announcing the death of my mother who was eighty-one. Seshan had opened the telegram and told everyone, including Indira. Foregoing lunch, I went straight to bed without changing. In the evening the PM and Indira came down and found me, as usual, in my study, refreshed and composed, attending to my work. I told them that my father had died four days previously and that my mother fainted immediately. She regained consciousness only once for a brief moment. It was raining torrentially then. She murmured, "He must be feeling cold" and again went into a coma, never to open her eyes again. My parents had been married for seventy years. They had their quarrels, sufferings, sorrows and joys. I have never seen a couple so devoted to each other. In fact, they died together. The PM remained silent. Indira said, "Papu came to your room after lunch and found you fast asleep." In order to break the gloom in my study, I said, "That shows that I have a clear conscience," to which Indira retorted, to the amusement of her father, "It can also mean that you have none" and gave me a smile. I told her, again to the amusement of the father, "It is the only witty remark you have ever uttered in your life."

Nehru lost his temper with me only once—for no fault of mine. I was annoyed and I also lost my temper. For two days I sulked. Then he sent for me and smiled, which was his way of making up. I told him, "I am sorry; I should have shown more understanding. Your mind must have been upset about something at that time. I have seen you losing your temper many a time, but that has been at seeing stupidity or vulgarity." I then told him the story of a famous Greek philosopher losing his temper and assaulting the librarian of the Public Library in Athens. The reason was that the library did not have a copy of a particular book on Socrates. I said I mentally approved of it. He smiled.

It was Nehru's practice right from September 1946 to work in his secretariat on Sundays and holidays. Those were hectic times and he hardly got more than five hours of sleep at night. The result was that he would doze off at meetings. I wanted him to get some sleep in the afternoons of Sundays and holidays. It was no use telling him this because he was too proud of his health. So I chose to appeal to his sense of fairness. I told him that the PAs and others were married people with children and they would like to take their wives and children to a cinema or for shopping occasionally. I added, "In fairness to them you should stop going to the secretariat in the afternoons of Sundays and holidays. I shall arrange for one or two PAs to be in the house so that you can do your work there and, in any event, I will be there. Before agreeing to it he said, "Work never kills anybody." I replied, "Overwork makes a person stale. You cannot afford to be stale." As I had expected, this led to Nehru taking some rest after lunch on Sundays and holidays. I authorized all PAs to take a full day off once a week. I had a special allowance sanctioned for them, and for the PAs on night duty I arranged, in addition, rent-free quarters near the PM's residence. They all worked very hard without looking at their watches. Later, the PM got into the habit of having half an hour's nap daily after lunch.

Nehru, recognized as one of the world's five best English prose writers of his day, was loath to sign anything drafted by others except strictly protocol communications. The result was that he had to spend an enormous amount of time in dictating letters and drafting or dictating statements and speeches. He has signed more communications drafted by me than by all the others put together. That was because, when the signed letters and notes came from him, I would detain some that were dictated in his weariness late at night. These I redrafted for his signature.

Some of Nehru's finest speeches were either extempore or written in his own hand when alone, without any disturbance, and when he was emotionally stirred. The "Tryst with Destiny" speech delivered at the midnight meeting of the Constituent Assembly on 14-15 August 1947 was written in his own hand. When the typed copy and the handwritten draft were delivered to me by the PA, I consulted Roget's International *Thesaurus* and went to Nehru. I said "Date with Destiny" was not a happy phrase for a solemn occasion because the word date had acquired an American connotation of assignation with girls and women. I suggested its replacement with "tryst" or "rendezvous," but cautioned that the phrase "Rendezvous with Destiny" was used by President Franklin Roosevelt in one of his famous wartime speeches. He thought for a moment and changed date to tryst in the typescript. The original handwritten draft with the word date remained with me all these years and was handed over recently to the Nehru Museum and Library along with innumerable documents and photographs.

The broadcast on the day of Gandhiji's assassination, with the sublime words "the Light has gone out," was made extempore, without the aid of any notes.

At the end of 1951 I wanted S. D. Upadhyaya, who had worked for Nehru and his father for long years, and who was rotting, to be put up as a Congress candidate for election to the first Lok Sabha. In fact, I had advised Upadhyaya to find a suitable constituency and get the Provincial Congress Committee to sponsor him. One day, while I was going with the PM to N. N. Bery, the dentist, I spoke to him about Upadhyaya. He reacted strongly against the proposal. He asked, "What can he do in parliament? He is singularly unsuitable for parliament." I said, "He will be as good or as bad as fifty per cent of the Congress MPs; and it will be a fitting reward for a man known for his loyalty though not ability." He kept quiet. Nehru was then Congress President. On our way home from Dr Bery's clinic he asked me to tell Upadhyaya to have his name sent to the AICC by a PCC. I said that this had already been done and his proposed constituency was Satna in Vindhya Pradesh. That is how Upadhyaya entered parliament and remained a member of either House for several terms. If any man deserved a prize for never opening his mouth in parliament, it was Upadhyaya. I am glad the poor man, in his old age (he is now past seventy-eight), is now entitled to draw a pension of Rs 500 per month as an ex-MP.

Throughout my association with government I never asked for any favours from the PM or any minister or any official. I hated to be a supplicant before anyone. No relative of mine, near or distant, ever got a job or any favour from government. However, I did not hesitate to intervene directly sometimes, and mostly through the PM, in cases where injustice was done to individuals. It is true that I have been instrumental in the appointment of innumerable ministers, governors and non-official ambassadors—none of them related to me. There was perfect understanding between Nehru and me. On some rare occasions he did question my judgment, but he doubted nothing else. He treated me as a colleague. Of course, he knew that I was not available to be treated in any other way. I have also been instrumental in preventing some appointments. One such I shall relate. Soon after the appointment of Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit as an ambassador, Nehru sponsored his brother-in-law, G. P. Hutheesing, for appointment as commissioner to Malaya. He had gone with Nehru to Malaya as his secretary in January 1946 and stayed back for a couple of weeks to study the position of Indians there. Two senior officials of the Commonwealth Relations Department saw me privately and requested me to prevent the appointment if possible. I decided to resort to the indirect approach. I talked to Hutheesing, who happened to be in Delhi then, and told him that it would be *infra dig* to accept a diplomatic post which did not carry the rank of a first class ambassador, considering his education and background. I asked him, "Why do you, a rich man, want to lower yourself?" He said, "I am going to tell Bhai this evening that I don't want it." Thus Gunotham Purushotham Hutheesing was talked out of a situation which would have resulted in Nehru being accused of nepotism. Some months later, while driving to Palam airport, I related the whole story to the PM; and also told him the story about the only son of my widowed sister who was old enough to be my mother. She sent him to me in Delhi for a job. There was then a vacancy in the PM's secretariat for which he was qualified; or I could have easily fixed him up elsewhere; but I gave him his train fare and some pocket money to return home. My sister was deeply hurt. Nehru told me that I was a fool to have done it. I replied that in some matters I would rather be a fool. I asked him, "Didn't you recently say that in public life one should not only be correct but should appear to be so?" Silence was the understandable reaction.

In the mid-fifties a minister of state foolishly got into trouble. He was sent as a delegate to the UN General Assembly. A rich man, and a married man with children, he took with him a youngish woman and stayed in hotels in New York, London and Paris, entering their names as "Mr and Mrs" in order to stay together in the same rooms. Much later the woman arrived at the residence of the minister in New Delhi with her baggage and demanded the right to stay there even as a servant—much to the embarrassment of the minister and his wife. She was thrown out; but she managed to get a room in Western Court. She met many important people and registered her complaint with them. Finally, she waylaid the PM as he and I were going home from the office. She mumbled something to the PM. While driving home, the PM asked me to send for the minister and talk to him. I rang up the minister and he came in the afternoon to my office. It was a Saturday when parliament was not in session. He confessed to everything. I gave him a piece of paper and asked him to write out his resignation from the Council of Ministers addressed to the PM. As I dictated slowly, he wrote, "I hereby tender my resignation from the Council of Ministers for personal reasons. I shall be grateful if you will be good enough to forward it to the President for his acceptance." I asked the minister to see me on Monday morning in my office in Parliament House with a common friend, U. S. Malliah, MP, who was aware of the incident. They met me as suggested. I told the minister that where hormones were concerned I had no right to pass judgment on anyone; but I added, "You have committed the inconceivable folly of entering your name and that of the woman in hotel registers everywhere as "Mr and Mrs." Some people have egged her on and sent her to Delhi to blackmail you. I suggest that you buy her silence. Your good friend Malliah, I am sure, will succeed in persuading her to quietly go away from Delhi. Malliah should decide the amount to be given to her. Malliah decreed that, considering the minister's financial position, he should give her Rs 50,000. This was done within two days, and the woman left Delhi quietly. Later, I gave the PM all the facts and the letter of resignation of the minister. The PM thought over the matter for a couple of days and decided not to accept the resignation. And the minister survived and prospered. He became a Cabinet Minister in the Indira regime during which he proved to be the most servile of ministers. He was the first to take the little boy Sanjay around in his state, launching him into politics. At a public meeting organized at government expense, the minister stood up on his haunches and said something very profound, "I have slaved for your grandfather and your mother, and I shall slave for you." I do not know for whom he is slaving now.

It was never in my nature to be a sycophant and a flatterer. I have irritated and annoyed Nehru in private more than H. V. Kamath, Ram Manohar Lohia or Raj Narain in public. Once, at a reception at the India House in London, to which Attlee and several other dignitaries came, Nehru stood in a corner chatting with Lady Mountbatten all the while. Krishna Menon turned to me and said that people were commenting on it and requested me to break in so that Nehru could move about. I told him that I had no *locus standi*, he was the host and it was his duty to make the PM circulate. Krishna Menon did not have the guts to do the right thing. Two other similar parties were in the offing elsewhere in the next few days, and I did not want a repetition of the PM being glued to one person. Later, in the evening I sent the PM a handwritten note about the incident which, I said, resulted in unfavourable comment and needless gossip. I did not wish to embarrass him by talking to him personally about this matter. He was too big a man to take my note amiss. It had the desired effect and the other two parties went off well. In the ultimate analysis, I really did not care what Nehru or anyone else thought of me as long as I was true to myself.

After my resignation from government in 1959, I continued to do some personal work for Nehru. The last time I saw him was on 27 April 1964. I gave him a prepared note. He read it twice. He could not take in anything. I told him that he need not bother and that I would leave written instructions to his staff on his behalf. He was no longer in a condition to do any useful work. I felt immeasurably sad. I went off to Simla with the premonition that I would never see him again. On 27 May 1964, in the forenoon, I received a telephone message from a friend in Delhi that the PM was sinking. The Lieutenant-Governor of Himachal Pradesh was good enough to arrange transport for me from Simla to Delhi where I arrived late at night. It was a hot and dusty day; and in Delhi there was an earthquake.

Though I have found it psychologically difficult to write some chapters of this book, it was this chapter that I found the most difficult.

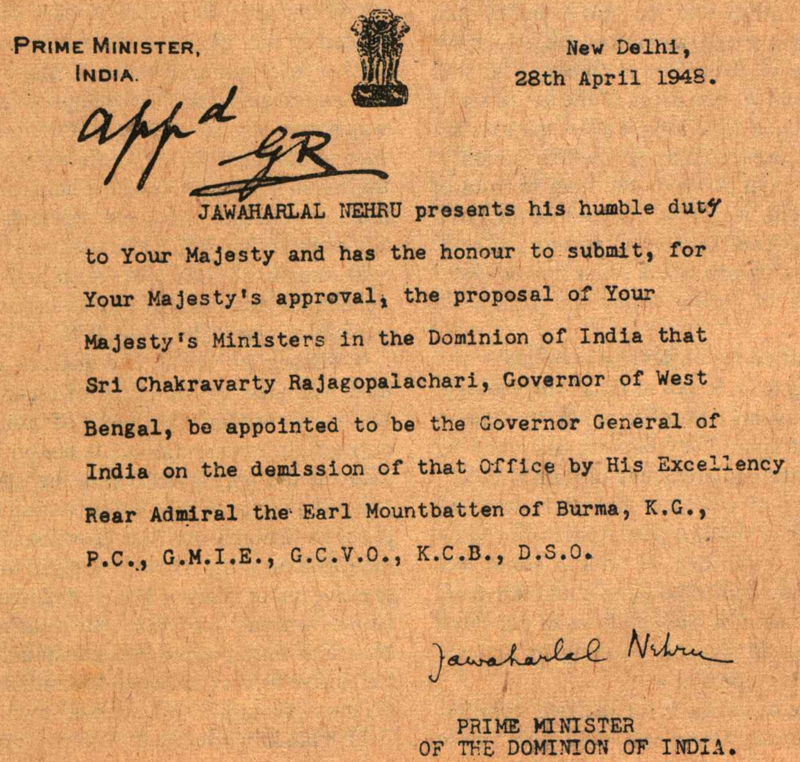
Personal Embarrassment of a Rebel

AT the Viceroy House at 11 A.M., on 2 September 1946, on the installation of the interim government, an acute personal embarrassment awaited Nehru. He had to affirm allegiance to King George VI, Emperor of India and also to affirm that he would well and truly serve "our Sovereign." Nehru was suddenly confronted with these. He had no choice. He suppressed his embarrassment and extreme annoyance and went through the affirmation of allegiance and affirmation of office which read as follows:

> FORM OF AFFIRMATION OF ALLEGIANCE
> I, Jawaharlal Nehru, do solemnly affirm that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to His Majesty, KING GEORGE THE SIXTH, Emperor of India, His Heirs, and Successors, according to law.
>
> FORM OF AFFIRMATION OF OFFICE
> I, Jawaharlal Nehru, do solemnly affirm that I will well and truly serve our Sovereign, KING GEORGE THE SIXTH, Emperor of India, in the Office of Member of the Governor General's Executive Council, and that I will do right to all manner of people after the laws and usages of India without fear or favour affection or ill-will.

For several days Nehru went on murmuring like a child, "I had not bargained for these." The conscience of Sardar Patel, Rajendra Prasad, Rajaji and others was not pricked.

When dominion government came on 15 August 1947 the Emperor of India automatically stepped down to become King of India; and Nehru, the Prime Minister, corresponded directly with the King. The British Government went out of the picture. Nehru soon discovered that his communications to the King had to be in third person and in the form of "humble duty submissions." When the first such submission was placed before him for his signature, Nehru was annoyed and said, "Oh Lord" and pushed away the signature pad. After some time he signed "the wretched thing." Here is a later sample of the humble duty submission:



PRIME MINISTER,
INDIA.

New Delhi,
28th April 1948.

Appd GR

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU presents his humble duty to Your Majesty and has the honour to submit, for Your Majesty's approval, the proposal of Your Majesty's Ministers in the Dominion of India that Sri Chakravarty Rajagopalachari, Governor of West Bengal, be appointed to be the Governor General of India on the demission of that Office by His Excellency Rear Admiral the Earl Mountbatten of Burma, K.G., P.C., G.M.I.E., G.C.V.O., K.C.B., D.S.O.

Jawaharlal Nehru

PRIME MINISTER
OF THE DOMINION OF INDIA.

Mahatma Gandhi

EVEN THOUGH I had opportunities of developing contacts with Gandhiji, I instinctively kept away from him. Of course, I recognized his greatness. But I was baffled by him. My contacts with him were limited to personally delivering to him important communications from Nehru.

Early in 1947 an old foreign friend presented to me a very small, elegant, ivory-coloured transistor radio—one of the earliest of its kind. As soon as it was switched on, it started working. On closing the lid, it stopped. Nehru saw it and was fascinated like a child. So I gave it to him. He kept it in his dressing room and listened to the radio news bulletin while shaving. He used to bring it down at all mealtimes to listen to. He spoke to Gandhiji about it and also about me. Gandhiji had already heard about me from Rajkumari Amrit Kaur. Nehru told me that Gandhiji had never listened to a radio and asked me to take the radio with me to Birla House (where Gandhiji was staying) and let him listen to the 6 P.M. news bulletin. I reached Birla House a few minutes before 6 P.M. and presented myself before Gandhiji. He asked me to sit down on the floor in front of him, which I did. At 6 P.M. I switched the radio on. Gandhiji listened for about a minute and said, "Close it, does anyone speak sense nowadays?" It was a period of serious communal troubles in India.

Gandhiji baffled me on several matters:

1) Preaching Ram Rajya of Hindu mythology. Millions of Muslims and other minorities had no use for Ram Rajya. They became alienated by Gandhiji's continued preaching of Ram Rajya.

2) Preaching of cow worship and incessant writing about it in the *Harijan*. Apart from Muslims and other minorities, as well as some sections of Harijans and tribal people and adivasis, who were alienated by this, millions of educated Hindus wanted to worship nothing or at least something better than a cow.

3) Preaching of celibacy for married couples. Few except Morarji Desai and some others were converted to this. Some, who practised it, eventually gave up; and some developed psychological problems.

4) Advocating support for the Khilafat movement in India. This was one of the most opportunistic adventures of Gandhiji's. When Kemal Ataturk came up and abolished the Caliphate, Gandhiji looked foolish. Gandhiji was trying to forge Hindu-Muslim unity on quicksand.

5) Gandhiji's unscientific and staggering remark early in 1934, to the effect that the Bihar earthquake had been a punishment for the sin of untouchability.

6) Fierce condemnation of smoking by the workers of the textile industry in Lancashire thrown out of employment owing to the boycott of British cloth in India.

7) Savage treatment of a Congress worker who could not give full account of a small amount placed at his disposal. Gandhiji asked him to walk over a hundred miles during the height of summer to get back to his village, even though he was personally convinced that the man was honest and innocent. C. F. Andrews, who witnessed this harsh treatment, took the man aside and gave him his train fare and a few rupees from his pocket without Gandhiji's knowledge.

8) Fanatic advocacy of Hindi, one of the least developed languages of India, surpassing that of any chauvinist in the Hindi belt.

9) Giving the world, in a quixotic gesture, his ideal nominee for the office of Head of State in India—an untouchable girl "of stout heart, incorruptible and crystal-like in her purity." However, at the appropriate time, he advised Lord Mountbatten to accept the invitation of the Congress to become the first Governor-General of independent India. He also advised Mountbatten to move out of Viceroy House and live in a simple home without servants. He wanted Viceroy House to be converted into a hospital. He did not fail to give further advice to Mountbatten to grow his own vegetables and clean his own toilet!

10) Gandhiji's letter to Viceroy Lord Linlith-

gow, written early in June 1940, as Hitler had just overrun Holland, and Belgium was about to fall. The letter read, "This manslaughter must be stopped. You are losing. If you persist, it will result in greater bloodshed. Hitler is not a bad man. If you will call it off today, he will follow suit. If you want to send me to Germany or anywhere else, I am at your disposal. You can also inform the Cabinet about this."

There is no record of the Viceroy having forwarded to the British Cabinet Gandhiji's "momentous" letter, nor of the sensation it created at 10 Downing Street!

11) Gandhian economics—it is a sure way of achieving eternal backwardness and perpetuating poverty in India. Gandhiji had been advocating decontrol of foodgrains and other essential items of daily use, and the scrapping of rationing soon after the Government of India passed into Indian hands, even though the food situation was very critical. At the instance of Nehru, John Matthai called on Gandhiji and talked to him for an hour. Matthai reported that throughout the one hour he had the definite impression that he was addressing a wall. The matter came up before the Cabinet, which was equally divided. The decision in favour of Gandhiji's demand was taken by the Prime Minister's casting vote. It had disastrous consequences; and the country and its people had to pay a very heavy price for adopting Gandhian economics. Sarojini Naidu once said, "Many will never know how much it cost to keep that old man in poverty."

12) During one of his fasts Gandhiji said, "If I have acetone in my urine, it is because my faith in Rama is incomplete!"

13) Gandhiji's advice to women faced with rape in the Punjab during partition was to bite their tongue and hold their breath until they died. Confucius gave different advice to a young girl. He told her, "If you find yourself in a situation where rape is inevitable and there is no chance of escape, my advice to you is to lie back and enjoy it."

14) Gandhiji's rejection of modern birth control methods to curb population. What was acceptable to him was the one he himself practised—continence. He refused to make allowance for human frailty.

I never considered Gandhiji had anything to teach me about nonviolence, ends and means, detachment (*nishkama karma*), compassion and loving one's enemies, because these were preached and practised far more eloquently about 2,000 years ago by Jesus Christ. G. K. Chesterton once said, "Christianity has not been tried and found wanting; it had been found difficult and never tried." On a smaller scale, this is how I felt about Gandhiji. I could never have been a follower of Gandhiji's however much I tried. In fact I did not want to try.

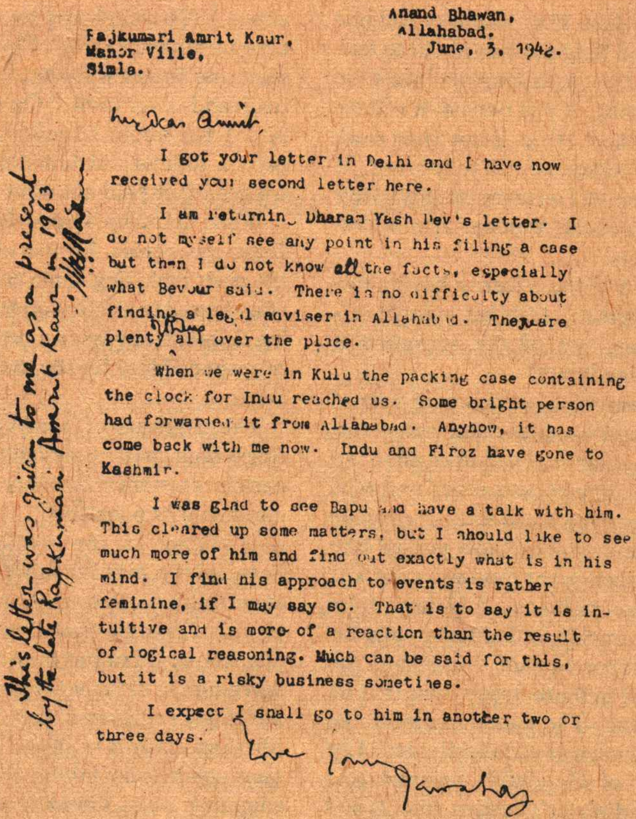
While Gandhiji's opposition to the partition of India was heroic, he was unrealistic considering the past, including some actions of his own, that contributed to it. No wonder the Congress Working Committee passed a resolution absolving him of responsibility for the decision agreeing to partition.

The last phase of Gandhiji's life constituted his finest hour, more especially the last month of his earthly existence (January 1948). He was exercised over two matters:

1) For weeks, representatives of Muslims had been asking him for advice as to whether they should risk death or give up the struggle and migrate to Pakistan. Gandhiji's advice was, "Stay and risk death rather than run away." Delhi and surrounding areas were overflowing with Hindu and Sikh refugees crying for vengeance on all Muslims staying in India. They had seized mosques and Muslim homes all over the city and surrounding areas. Gandhiji wanted them to return those homes to their Muslim owners and go back to their camps.

2) The Indian Cabinet decided to withhold payment of the partition debt of Rs 550 million to Pakistan. The Cabinet did not want to disturb the already disturbed public opinion by giving Pakistan the money which was likely to be used to pay for arms which would be used against India in conditions existing at that time. Lord Mountbatten feared that the decision to withhold payment might drive a desperate and bankrupt Jinnah to war. The Cabinet refused to listen to Mountbatten. Gandhiji considered the Cabinet decision as immoral.

On these two issues Gandhiji's last fast (13 to 18 January 1948) took place. Sardar Patel tried to argue with Gandhiji about the payment of Rs 550 million to Pakistan. Gandhiji's only reply was, "You are not the man I once knew." (Gandhiji was deeply distressed at two speeches Patel delivered during the previous two months at public meetings in Lucknow and Jaipur severely criticizing him.) Within three days of Gandhiji's fast the Government of India announced that it had ordered immediate payment of the amount to Pakistan.



Anand Bhawan,
Allahabad.
June, 3, 1942.

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur,
Manor Ville,
Simla.

My dear Amrit,

I got your letter in Delhi and I have now received your second letter here.

I am returning Dharam Yash Dev's letter. I do not myself see any point in his filing a case but then I do not know all the facts, especially what Bevour said. There is no difficulty about finding a legal adviser in Allahabad. They are plenty of them all over the place.

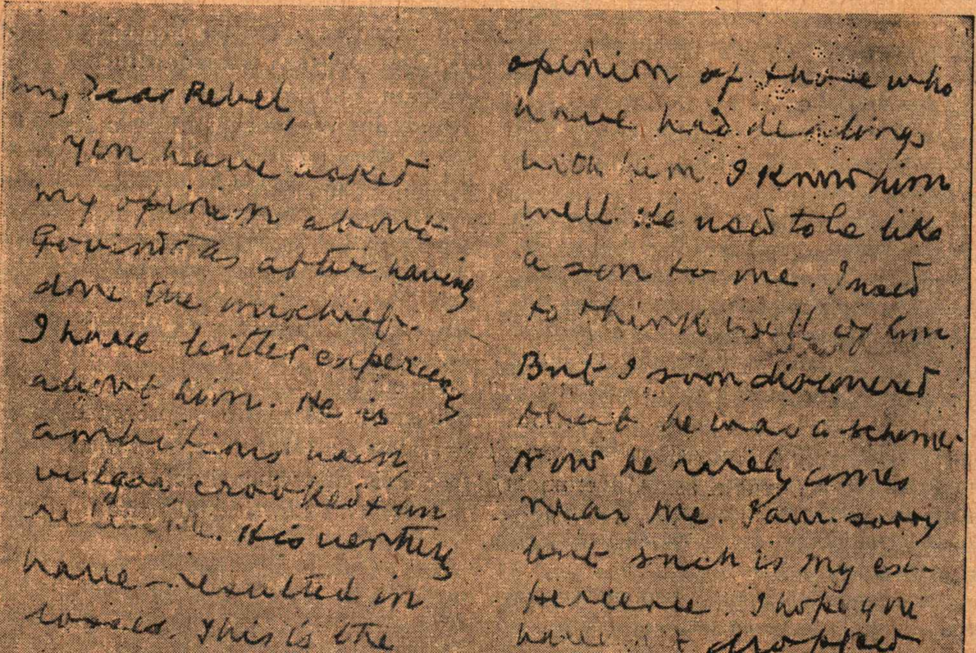
When we were in Kulu the packing case containing the clock for Indu reached us. Some bright person had forwarded it from Allahabad. Anyhow, it has come back with me now. Indu and Firoz have gone to Kashmir.

I was glad to see Bapu and have a talk with him. This cleared up some matters, but I should like to see much more of him and find out exactly what is in his mind. I find his approach to events is rather feminine, if I may say so. That is to say it is intuitive and is more of a reaction than the result of logical reasoning. Much can be said for this, but it is a risky business sometimes.

I expect I shall go to him in another two or three days.

Love
Yours
Jawahar

This letter was given to me as a present by the late Rajkumari Amrit Kaur in 1963. M.O. Mathai



My Dear Rebel,

You have asked my opinion about Govindas after having done the mischief. I have bitter experience about him. He is ambitious vain vulgar, crooked & unreliable. His working have resulted in losses. This is the

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opinion of those who have had dealings with him. I know him well. He used to be like a son to me. I used to think well of him. But I soon discovered that he was a schemer. Now he rarely comes near me. I am sorry but such is my experience. I hope you have not dropped much. Love Tyrant

On the 18th, representatives of militant Sikhs, Muslims, Christians, Parsis, Harijans, Sadhus, Hindu Mahasabha and RSS stood by Gandhiji's bedside and gave the undertaking to preserve communal peace not only in Delhi but also throughout India. The High Commissioner of Pakistan was also present.

Gandhiji could be devastating in his comments about people. One of his undated letters to Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, who gave it to me as a present, read:

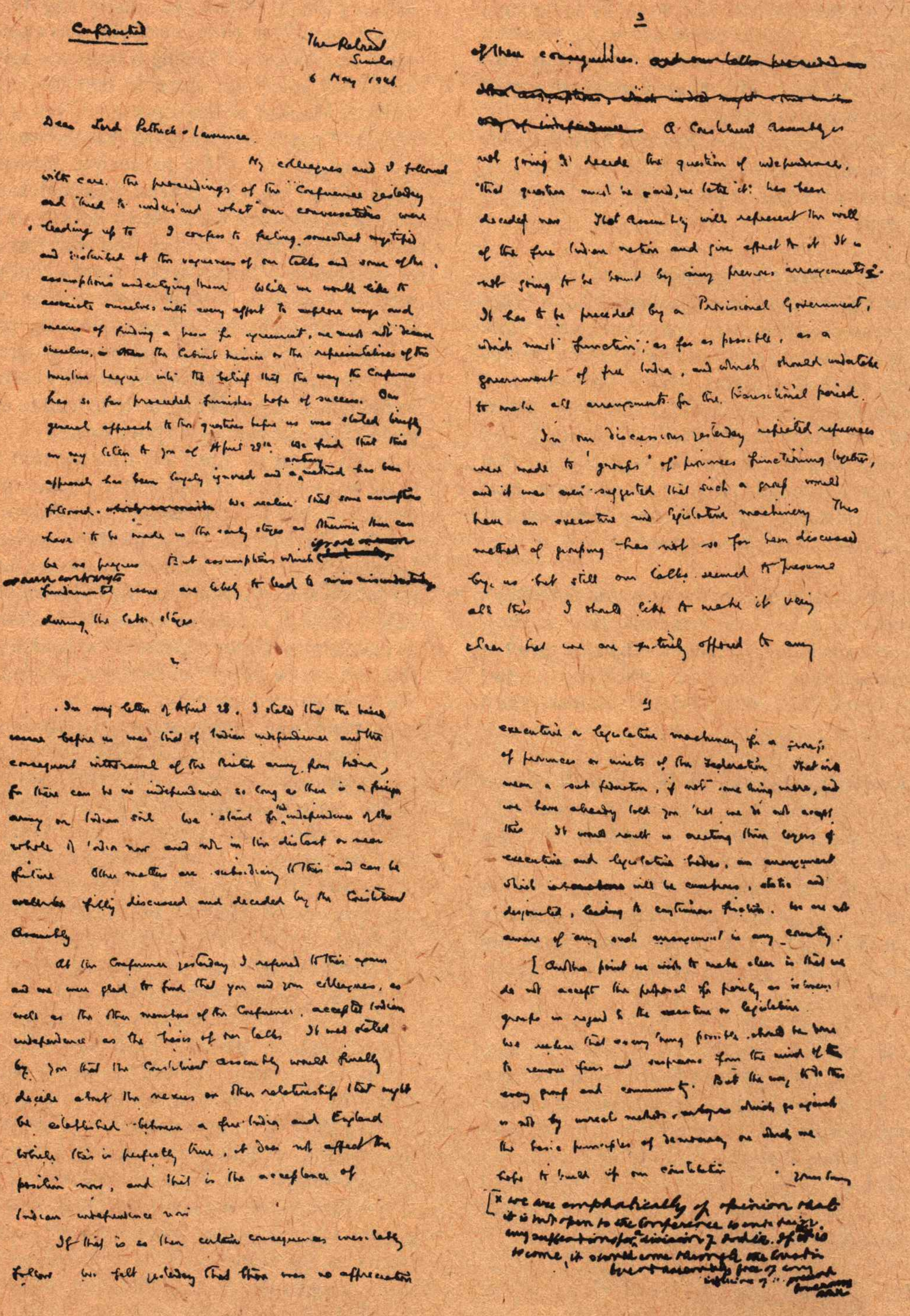
> You have asked my opinion about Govind Das after having done the mischief. I have bitter experiences about him. He is ambitious, vain, vulgar, crooked and unreliable. His ventures have resulted in losses. This is the opinion of those who have had dealings with him. I know him well. He used to be like a son to me. I used to think well of him. But I soon discovered that he was a schemer. Now he rarely comes near me. I am sorry, but such is my experience. I hope you haven't dropped much.

Nehru once expressed the view that Gandhiji's approach to events was feminine, that is, intuitive, and was more of a reaction than the result of logical reasoning. An extract from Nehru's letter dated 3 June 1942, addressed to Rajkumari Amrit Kaur reads:

> I was glad to see Bapu and have a talk with him. This cleared up some matters, but I should like to see much more of him and find out exactly what is in his mind. I find his approach to events is rather feminine, if I may say so. That is to say it is intuitive and is more of a reaction than the result of logical reasoning. Much can be said for this, but it is a risky business sometimes.

As everyone knows, Nehru was the draftsman of the Congress regardless of who was its President. Practically all its resolutions and correspondence with British authorities were drafted by him. Below is a letter to Lord Pethick Lawrence dated 6 May 1946, drafted by Nehru and corrected by Gandhiji, for Congress President Maulana Azad to sign:

> My colleagues and I followed with care the proceedings of the conference yesterday and tried to understand what our conversations were leading us to. I confess to feeling somewhat mystified and disturbed at the vagueness of our talks and some of the assumptions underlying them. While we would like to associate ourselves with every effort to explore ways and means of finding a basis for agreement, we must not deceive ourselves, the Cabinet Mission or the representatives of the Muslim League into the belief that the way the Conference has so far proceeded furnishes hope of success. Our general approach to the questions before us was stated briefly in my letter to you of April 28. We find that this approach has been largely ignored and a contrary method has been followed. We realise that some assumptions have to be made in the early stages as otherwise there can be no progress. But assumptions which ignore or run contrary to fundamental issues are likely to lead to misunderstandings during the later stages.
>
> In my letter of April 28, I stated that the basic issue before us was that of Indian independence and the consequent withdrawal of the British army from India, for there can be no independence so long as there is a foreign army on Indian soil. We stand for the independence of the whole of India now and not in the distant or near future. Other matters are subsidiary to this and can be fully discussed and decided by the Constituent Assembly.
>
> At the Conference yesterday I refferred to this again and we were glad to find that you and your colleagues, as well as the other members of the conference, accepted Independence as the basis of our talks. It was stated by you that the Constituent Assembly would finally decide about the nexus or other relationship that might be established between a free India and England. While this is perfectly true, it does not affect the position now, and that is the acceptance of Indian independence now.
>
> If that is so, then certain consequences inevitably follow. We felt yesterday that there was no appreciation of these consequences. A Constituent Assembly is not going to decide the question of independence; that question must be and, we take it, has been decided now. That Assembly will represent the will of the free Indian nation and give effect to it. It is not going to be bound by any previous arrangements. It has to be preceded by a Provisional Government, which must function, as far as possible, as a Government of free India, and which should undertake to make all arrangements for the transitional period.



Confidential

The Retreat
Simla
6 May 1946

Dear Lord Pethick-Lawrence,

My colleagues and I followed with care the proceedings of the Conference yesterday and tried to understand what our conversations were leading up to. I confess to feeling somewhat mystified and disturbed at the vagueness of our talks and some of the assumptions underlying them. While we would like to associate ourselves with every effort to explore ways and means of finding a basis for agreement, we must not delude ourselves, or others, the Cabinet Mission or the representatives of the Muslim League into the belief that the way the Conference has so far proceeded furnishes hope of success. Our general approach to the questions before us was stated briefly in my letter to you of April 28th. We find that this approach has been largely ignored and a contrary method has been followed. ~~[illegible]~~ We realise that some assumptions have to be made in the early stages as otherwise there can be no progress. But assumptions which ignore ~~[illegible]~~ or run contrary to fundamental issues are likely to lead to misunderstandings during the later stages.

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At the Conference yesterday I referred to this again and we were glad to find that you and your colleagues, as well as the other members of the Conference, accepted Indian independence as the basis of our talks. It was stated by you that the Constituent Assembly would finally decide about the nexus or other relationship that might be established between a free India and England. While this is perfectly true, it does not affect the position now, and that is the acceptance of Indian independence now.

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In our discussions yesterday repeated references were made to 'groups' of provinces functioning together, and it was even suggested that such a group would have an executive and legislative machinery. This method of grouping has not so far been discussed by us but still our talks seemed to presume all this. I should like to make it very clear that we are entirely opposed to any

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executive or legislative machinery for a group of provinces or units of the Federation. That will mean a sub-federation, if not something more, and we have already told you that we do not accept this. It would result in creating three layers of executive and legislative bodies, an arrangement which ~~[illegible]~~ will be cumbrous, static and disjointed, leading to continuous friction. We are not aware of any such arrangement in any country.

[Another point we wish to make clear is that we do not accept the proposal for parity as between groups in regard to the executive or legislature. We realise that everything possible should be done to remove fears and suspicions from the mind of every group and community. But the way to do this is not by unreal methods, which go against the basic principles of democracy on which we hope to build up our constitution.

Yours sincerely

[* We are emphatically of opinion that it is not open to the Conference to entertain any suggestion for a division of India. If this is to come, it should come through the Constituent Assembly free from any influence of the present Government.

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We are emphatically of opinion that it is not open to the Conference to entertain any suggestions for a division of India. If that is to come, it should come through the Constituent Assembly free of any influence of the present Paramount Power.

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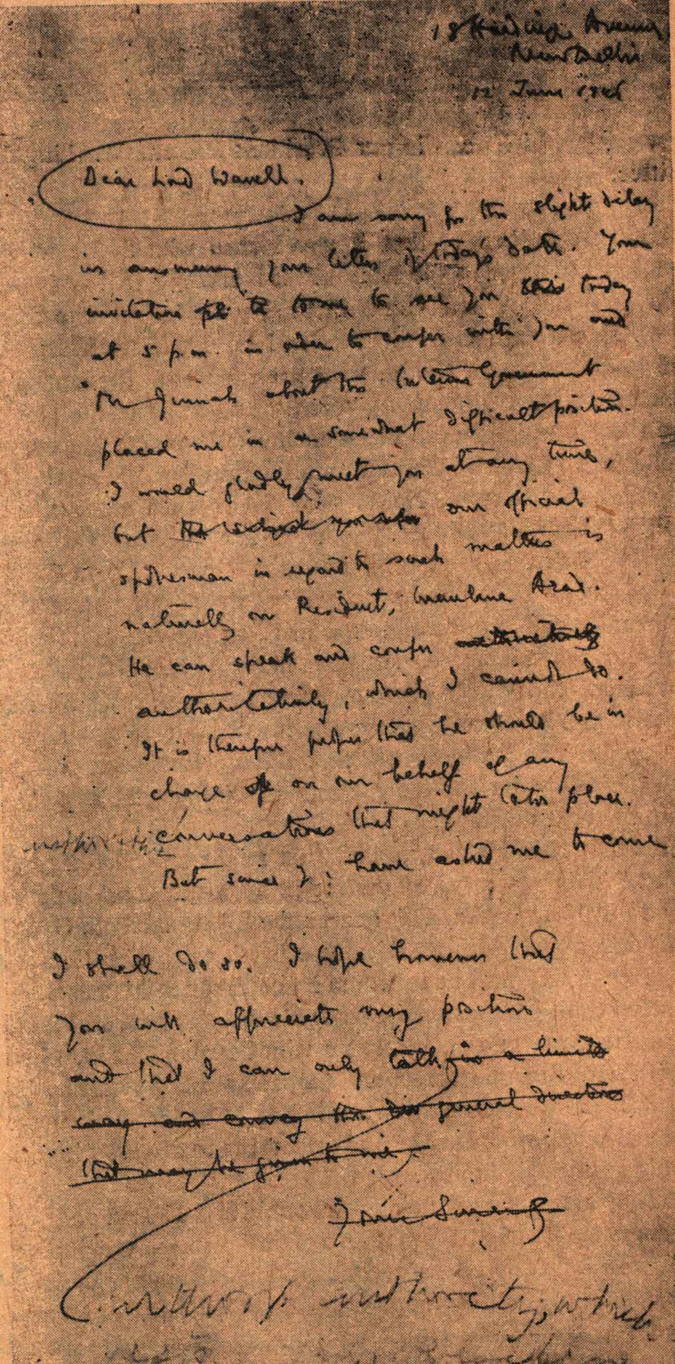
Below is the draft of a letter from Nehru dated 12 June 1946, addressed to Viceroy Lord Wavell as corrected by Gandhiji:

> I am sorry for the slight delay in answering your letter of today's date. Your invitation to me to see you today at 5 P.M. in order to confer with you and Mr. Jinnah about the Interim Government placed me in a somewhat difficult position. I would gladly meet you at any time, but our official spokesman in regard to such matters is naturally our President, Maulana Azad. He can speak and confer authoritatively, which I cannot do. It is therefore proper that he should be in charge on our behalf of any authoritative conversations that might take place. But since you have asked me to come I shall do so. I hope however that you will appreciate my position and that I can only talk



18 Hardinge Avenue,
New Delhi
12 June 1946

Dear Lord Wavell,

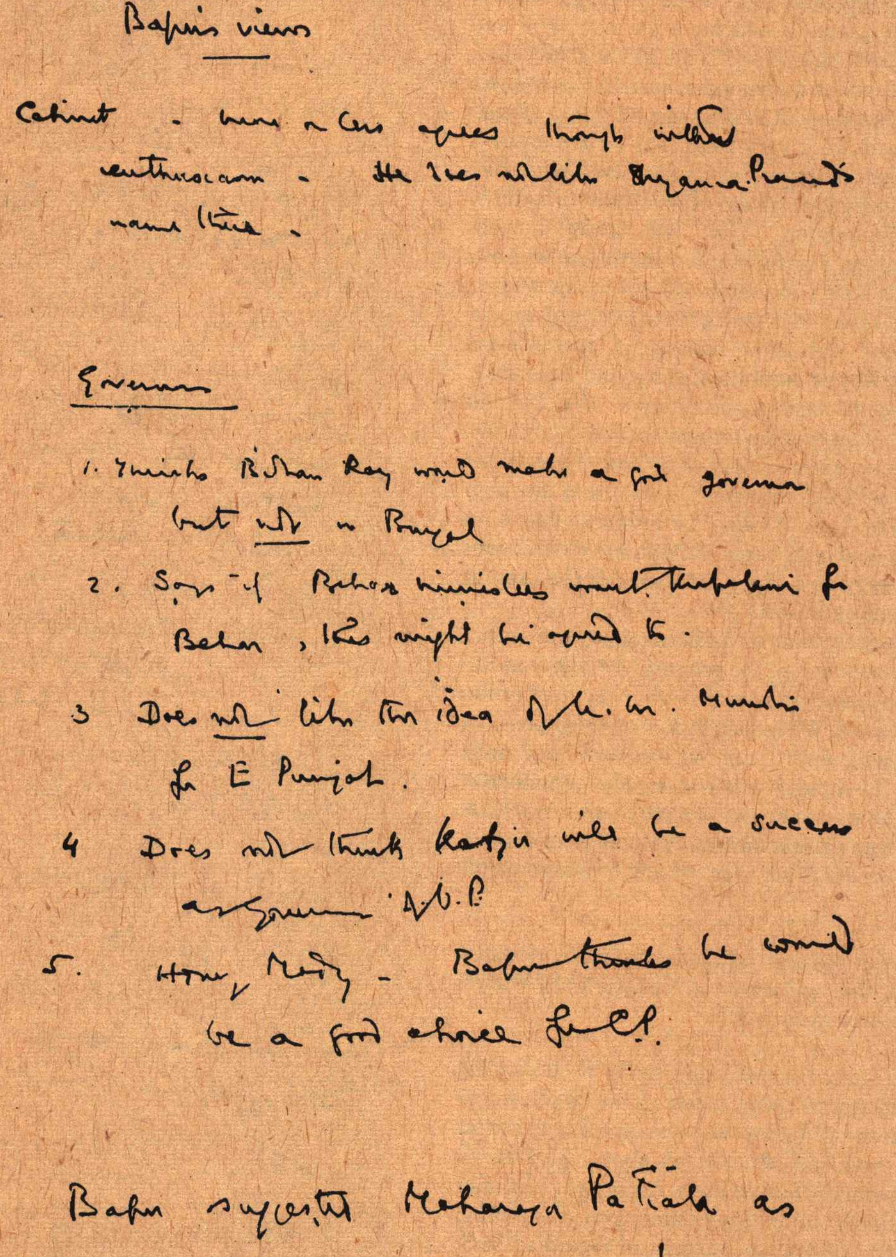
I am sorry for the slight delay in answering your letter of today's date. Your invitation to come to see you this today at 5 p.m. in order to confer with you and Mr Jinnah about the Interim Government placed me in a somewhat difficult position. I would gladly meet you at any time, but ~~[illegible]~~ our official spokesman in regard to such matters is naturally our President, Maulana Azad. He can speak and confer ~~authoritatively~~ authoritatively, which I cannot do. It is therefore proper that he should be in charge on our behalf of any conversations that might take place. But since you have asked me to come I shall do so. I hope however that you will appreciate my position and that I can only talk ~~in a limited way and convey the general directions that may be given to me.~~

~~Yours sincerely~~

without authority, which [illegible]

[illegible]

Yours sincerely



Bapu's views

Cabinet - more or less agrees though without enthusiasm - He does not like Shyama Prasad's name there.

Governors

1. Thinks Bidhan Roy would make a good governor but not in Bengal
2. Says if Behar ministers want Kripalani for Behar, this might be agreed to.
3 Does not like the idea of K. M. Munshi for E Punjab.
4 Does not think Katju will be a success as Governor U.P.
5. Homi Mody - Bapu thinks he would be a good choice for C.P.

Bapu suggested Maharaja Patiala as Governor of E. Punjab !
Failing him Sir Dalip Singh.

Sample of Nehru's consultations with Gandhiji on government matters

without authority, which vests in our President and the Working Committee.

Many people believe that it was Nehru who first referred to Gandhiji as "Father of the Nation." It is incorrect. It was Sarojini Naidu who did. When Gandhiji briskly walked to the rostrum of the Asian Relations Conference in New Delhi (28 March to 2 April 1947), Sarojini Naidu, who presided over the conference, announced in her commanding voice, "the Father of the Nation." There was an anticlimax to this—uncharitable people began to call Gandhiji's son Devadas Gandhi, "the Nation."

It was again Sarojini Naidu who, in another context, called Gandhiji "the Micky Mouse."

Throughout his life Nehru had what might be called a "father complex." This was very pronounced in his attitude and approach to Gandhiji. Nehru opened his heart almost completely to Gandhiji and discussed with him practically everything. After Gandhiji's death, Nehru had no one to whom he could open his heart. Consequently he got compartmentalized. He discussed several matters with Sardar Patel and Rajaji, some with Maulana Azad, Govind Ballabh Pant, Radhakrishnan and Gopalaswami Ayyangar. They were all men older than him. As Prime Minister, Nehru never summoned them; whenever he had something to discuss with them, he would go to their houses.

Death by assassination claimed Gandhiji at 5.17 P.M. on Friday, 30 January 1948. Some found it a parallel to the crucifixion of Jesus Christ and called it the second crucifixion. Immediately after the assassination, the telephone rang at 17 York Road. I took it. The call was from Birla House announcing Gandhiji's assassination. The caller thought that Nehru would be at home at that time; but he was still in his office at the Commonwealth Relations Department at the secretariat. I immediately rang him up and he rushed to Birla House.

As Nehru was about to leave Birla House for the All India Radio to make a broadcast and announce the shattering news to the Indian people, he spotted me in the crowd and beckoned to me. I managed to reach him by pushing through the crowd. He asked me to stay with him; he was shattered and trembling. In the car Nehru noticed that I was about to tell him something. He at once placed his hand on mine to silence me. He was in deep thought. I went up with him right into the studio from where he spoke. I sat there, dumb. And Nehru made his brief, heart-rending and moving speech starting with the sentence, "The Light has gone out of our lives." Neither Nehru nor any of us at 17 York Road ate that night.

Late at night Vincent Sheean, the noted American author and distinguished journalist, came to see me. He was weeping like a child and looked forlorn. I reluctantly agreed to accompany him to his flat near Narendra Place. The moment he arrived there he opened a bottle of Scotch. That was his way of drowning his anguish. He is the author of a biography of Gandhiji, *Lead Kindly Light*. I made my excuses and took leave of Vincent Sheean and rushed back to the house in case Nehru wanted me.

A few days after Gandhiji's assassination, Sarojini Naidu took to task some weeping people by saying, "That was the only death fit for him; did you want him to die of indigestion?"

Rajkumari Amrit Kaur told me that the reason why Gandhiji was late for his last prayer meeting was that he was in an animated conversation with Sardar Patel. They were discussing Nehru's note dated 6 January 1948, copies of which were distributed only to Gandhiji and Patel. It was never the practice of Nehru to speak to Lord Mountbatten about his differences with Patel. Rajkumari Amrit Kaur told me that had Gandhiji not been assassinated that day, Sardar Patel would most probably have been asked by Gandhiji to leave the Cabinet and remain with him.

Gandhiji's assassination made Nehru and Patel to sink their differences and to work together.

The idea of changing the name of Albuquerque Road to Tees January Marg (30 January Road), after the French fashion, originated with Nehru.

About six months after the assassination I quietly opened the door of the Prime Minister's office in the secretariat and found Nehru with head bowed and weeping, tears rolling down his cheeks. I quietly withdrew and closed the door without Nehru noticing me. I knew he was weeping for his beloved Bapu.

Churchill, Nehru and India

WINSTON CHURCHILL had two pronounced blind spots—India and the Suffragette movement. Aneurin Bevan, the fiery Welshman, had this in mind when he flayed Churchill once in parliament and called him a frozen adolescent.

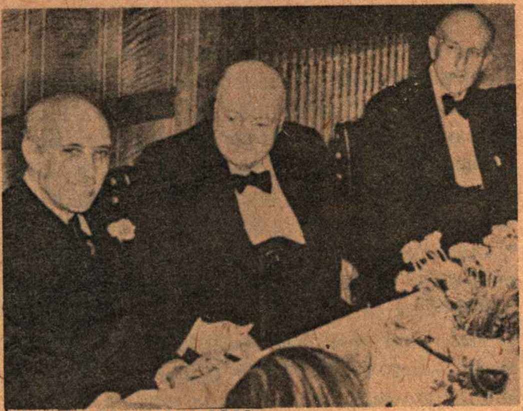
When the first woman, Lady Astor, took her seat in the House of Commons, Churchill had an uncomfortable and strange sensation. He told some of his friends, "I feel a woman had invaded my bathroom where I found myself only with a sponge to defend myself."

Churchill's India was the land he knew as a subaltern. He could not conceive of an India without the British. In his speech in the House of Commons on 6 March 1947, during the debate on "the question of transferring power in India to Indian hands," an agitated and emotional Churchill, as the leader of the opposition, *inter alia*, said:

> The third mistake was the dismissal of the eminent Indians composing the Viceroy's Council, and handing over the Government of India to Mr Nehru. The government of Mr Nehru has been a complete disaster, and a great degeneration and demoralization in the already weakened departmental machinery of the Government of India has followed from it. Between 30,000 and 40,000 people have been slaughtered in warfare between the two principal religions. Corruption is growing apace. They talk of giving India freedom, but freedom has been restricted since the Nehru government has come to power. Communism is growing so fast that it has been found necessary to raid and suppress Communist centres, which, in our broad British tolerance, we do not do here and have never done in India. The steps to freedom so far have been marked, by every degree in which British control is relaxed, by restriction of the ordinary individual, whatever his political views. It was a cardinal mistake to entrust the government to Mr Nehru. He has good reason to be the most bitter enemy of any connection between India and the British Commonwealth. Such was the situation before the latest plunge which the government have taken. This plunge, added to all that has gone before, makes it our duty to sever ourselves from the Indian policy of the government and to disclaim all responsibility for the consequences which will darken and redden the coming years. . . .
>
> Everyone knows that the fourteen month's time limit is fatal to any ordinary transference of power, and I am bound to say that the whole thing wears the aspect of an attempt by the government to make use of brilliant war figures to cover up a melancholy and disastrous transaction. . . .
>
> In handing over the Government of India to the so-called political classes, you are handing over to men of straw of whom in a few years no trace will remain.

A conference of Dominion Prime Ministers took place in London between 22 October and 27 October 1948. British Prime Minister Clement Attlee presided. Until then it used to be called the British Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference. At this conference in October 1948, which was attended for the first time by the Prime Ministers of India, Pakistan and Ceylon, the word British just dropped out without any legal step being taken to effect the change. From then on it was just the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference. Also, many British non-official institutions dropped the word Empire which was substituted by Commonwealth.

I was in London with Prime Minister Nehru in October 1948 for the Prime Ministers' Conference. We were staying at the Claridges Hotel. One morning an agitated secretary from India House, attached to our delegation office, came to me and said that the leader of the opposition, Winston Churchill, was on the telephone and wished to speak to Prime Minister Nehru. I took



Nehru and Churchill, 1953.

the telephone in the Prime Minister's sitting room. Churchill started speaking as if to Nehru and I let him continue for a couple of minutes. He was very polite, almost to the point of being humble, and pleaded that Nehru should have lunch with him the next day and ended up by asking, "Won't you please make it possible Mr Nehru?" At that moment Nehru came in from his bath. I gave him the telephone and told him briefly what had happened and added that he could easily put off the rather unimportant lunch engagement the next day and accept Churchill's invitation. Nehru spoke to him for a brief while over the telephone and accepted the invitation. On his return from lunch the next day, Nehru told me that there was no important talk. All that happened was that Churchill was trying to make up in his own way.

Immediately after the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, a conference of Commonwealth Prime Ministers took place in London from 3 June to 9 June 1953. Winston Churchill, as Prime Minister of Britain, presided. As usual I attended it. During my time these conferences took place in the Cabinet room of 10 Downing Street. Now they are public meetings in some public building.

As Churchill walked into the room, his presence was immediately felt in sharp contrast to Clement Attlee. One sensed "here is a big man." He spoke with a lisp and a slight stutter. Churchill could not achieve his ambition of becoming a great orator; but he became a master of the written word and a coiner of phrases. Whenever he was pleased with a phrase that he had coined, he liked to keep on repeating it. Churchill considered Lloyd George and Aneurin Bevan, both Welshmen, as great orators. Stating that an orator should be spontaneous, he once said, "When that fellow Bevan gets up, he does not know what he is going to say and where he will end; but I have every word written out in front of me." But Churchill was not wholly free from plagiarism. Here are some examples:

Referring to Hitler's threat that England's neck would be wrung like a chicken, Churchill, in his famous speech to the Canadian parliament, used the phrase "some chicken, some neck!" He was parodying Lawrence of Arabia.

Churchill's first speech in the House of Commons after becoming Prime Minister in 1940 contained the phrase "blood, toil, sweat and tears." This was lifted from Byron's poem "The Age of Bronze."

"Hell knows no fury as a woman scorned." This is downright stealing of William Congreve's couplet, "Heaven has no rage like love to hatred turned/Nor hell a fury like a woman scorned."

Churchill's phrase "iron curtain" is not original. The words first appeared in Ethel Snowden's *Through Bolshevik Russia* in 1920. Its wider application to countries within the Soviet sphere of influence originated with Goebbel's leading article in the issue of the weekly, *Das Reich*, dated 25 February 1945. In that he had said:

> Should the German people lay down its arms, the agreement between Roosevelt, Churchill and Stalin would allow the Soviets to occupy all Eastern and Southeastern Europe together with the major part of the Reich. An iron curtain would at once descend on this territory which, including the Soviet Union, would be of enormous proportions.

Nehru has never been accused of plagiarism.

Churchill attached great importance to the correct use of words. Once, at the dinner table, Churchill told his wife, "You ought not to say very delicious. 'Delicious' alone expresses everything you wish to say. You would not say 'very unique'." In this connection Lord Moran says that Churchill once thought of including the following in a speech at a university:

> A man called Thompson went to a surgeon and asked him to castrate him. The surgeon demurred; but when the man persisted and argued, he eventually agreed and took him into hospital. The morning after the operation Thompson woke up in great discomfort. He noticed that the man in the next bed was in pain and was groaning. He leaned towards him over the side of the bed. 'What did they do to you' he asked.

The man replied 'I have been circumcised'. 'Good Lord' Thompson exclaimed, 'that is the word I couldn't remember when the surgeon asked me what I wanted done'.

One evening Churchill was sitting on his bed and shouting for his hotwater bottle. The valet appeared. Churchill asked him where the hotwater bottle was. The valet replied, "You are sitting on it Sir; not a good idea." Churchill smiled and replied, "It is not an idea but a coincidence."

At one session of the conference of June 1953 Churchill became emotional about the Indian army and used superlative language for it. "Any day a couple of divisions of the Indian army for me, Mr Nehru," he said.

The last session of the conference was, as usual, devoted to the finalization of the communique. The Prime Ministers had before them a draft prepared by senior officials of the delegations. It was fascinating to see Churchill and Nehru, two masters of the correct use of words, in action. Whatever changes Nehru suggested were accepted by Churchill by his murmurs of approval.

Outside the conference, Churchill went out of his way to humour Nehru. He was instrumental in arranging a dinner for Harovians in honour of Nehru. Both Churchill and Nehru were products of Harrow Public School.

One morning at 10 Downing Street, British Cabinet Secretary Lord Norman Brook took me aside and told me that at a private function the previous evening a prominent person spoke disparagingly of Nehru. Churchill at once rebuked him sharply and said, "Remember he is a man who has conquered fear and hate."

The day before our leaving London after the conclusion of the conference, Churchill sent a brief handwritten letter to Nehru saying, "Remember what I told you—you are the Light of Asia." What a transformation in Churchill!

On 3 February 1955 Lord Moran asked Churchill about Nehru. Churchill said, "I get on well with him. I tell him he has a great role to play as leader of free Asia against communism." Asked how Nehru took it, Churchill replied, "Oh, he wants to do it, and I want him to do it. He has a feeling that communists are against him, and that is apt to change people's opinion."

Contrary to the general impression, neither Churchill nor Nehru were widely-read men. They wrote and spoke more than they read in their lives.

Churchill and Nehru shared a common allergy towards the American Secretary of State John Foster Dulles. In private conversation Churchill called Dulles a "dull, clumsy bastard" and hoped he would disappear. At another time he said of Dulles, "This fellow preaches like a Methodist priest, and his bloody text is always that nothing can come out of meeting with Malenkov." And at another time he observed, "Dulles is clever enough to be stupid on a rather large scale." Nehru took delight in repeating "Dull, Duller, Dulles." He once observed, "Krishna Menon is my answer to Dulles." This came out of Nehru's abundant vanity. Nehru once told me that he knew he had an ample measure of vanity, but that he was also capable of humility.

Very seldom did Nehru use swear words. I have heard him use "bloody" only once—about a person whose identity I shall not disclose. But to Churchill this and other choice epithets came naturally and prolifically.

Churchill was not given to self-criticism; neither was he vain. Nehru was given to self-criticism; and he had self-confessed vanity.

Ever since he became Prime Minister during England's darkest hour in 1940, Churchill never slept without the aid of sedatives. Until two years before his death, Nehru's was a singularly unmedicated body.

Churchill was a great admirer of Napoleon. He kept in his bedroom at Chartwell two small sculptured heads—one of Napoleon and the other of Nelson. One day, when Lord Moran was looking at Napoleon's head, Churchill remarked, "Ah, that was the most beautiful countenance from which genius ever looked upon mankind. He was a very wonderful man. I put him after Julius Caesar. Yes, he is at the top." Nehru, in his *Glimpses of World History*, has drawn a rather superficial picture of Napoleon about whom Lord Acton said in his Cambridge Lectures on Modern History, "No intellectual exercise can be more invigorating than to watch the working of the mind of Napoleon, the most entirely known as well as the ablest of historic men."

The introduction to the first of the two great works (written in 1890) that Count Albert Vandal left announced the spirit in which he intended to approach Napoleon. The subject was the relations between Napoleon and Alexander of Russia from 1807 to 1812, that is, the foreign policy from the period of the greatest power to the beginning of the disaster. For Vandal there was something fascinating and imposing about the gigantic historical figure in itself. Something which silenced criticism. With Pozzo di Borgo, one of the men who hated and admired Bonaparte most, he says that to "judge Napoleon would be like judging the universe."

Vandal felt admiration "for the genius which carried out or inspired amazing deeds, whose magical power raised to their highest pitch those qualities of honour, audacity, obedience and dedication, which are peculiar to our people, for him who, having reconciled our nation with itself, created from it an army of heroes, and for a time lifted the Frenchman above mankind."

In August 1942, in Cairo, Field Marshal Smuts spoke to Churchill about Mahatma Gandhi and said that "he is a man of God. You and I are mundane people. Gandhi has appealed to religious motives. You never have. That is where you have failed." Churchill, with a broad grin, replied, "I have made more bishops than anyone since St Augustine."

Nehru lacked the toughness of Churchill and Churchill-type courage in adversity. He wilted in the wake of the Chinese attack on India. His health could not stand up to the mental strain. Many things which he valued crashed around him. Finally his health collapsed. The Chinese perfidy in returning evil for good hastened the death of the Man of Peace.

The last of Churchill's great speeches in the House of Commons was on the hydrogen bomb in February 1955, two months before his retirement. He wound up by saying, "All the countries of the world might feel so vulnerable that, cowed by fear, they might at last be content to live in peace. Then it may well be that by the process of sublime irony they have reached a stage in this story that safety will be the sturdy child of terror, and survival the twin brother of annihilation." Churchill took twenty hours on the preparation of this speech and eight hours on checking facts.

Neither Churchill nor Nehru made use of ghost writers for their speeches as is the case in present day India. Nehru was by no means an orator; but he made several moving speeches, both extempore and written, whenever he was emotionally stirred.

After he suffered a stroke in 1953, when death seemed round the corner, Churchill confided to his famous physician, Lord Moran, not, however, without many qualifications, that he had been wrong about India. Lord Moran later commented, "But the circumstances were exceptional, for the confessional was a sick bed." And yet the last of the great imperialists had traversed a long way.

In this chapter I have drawn upon material contained in Lord Moran's bulky book on Churchill.

C. Rajagopalachari

I HAVE ALSO referred to Rajaji in the chapter "Rajendra Prasad and Radhakrishnan."

Endowed with a razor-sharp intellect and an analytical mind, Rajaji would peel an onion, layer after layer, to find out what an onion really was. He had the peculiar gift of alienating people. The man with the dark glasses would make most of his visitors feel that they were fools. This did not help in acquiring and retaining popularity. But he was a man of rare moral courage. He did not hesitate to part company from Gandhiji, to whom he was devoted and bound by numerous ties. He was not afraid to espouse unpopular causes.

Sarojini Naidu, in a personal talk with me, once compared Rajaji and Nehru. She said that "the Madras fox was a dry logical Adi Sankaracharya while Nehru was the noble compassionate Buddha."

Indira once related to me what her grandfather, Motilal Nehru, said of Rajaji in private. He said, "I cannot fathom what is happening behind those dark glasses. I once put a poker into his head, and lo! it came out as a corkscrew." Incidentally, Rajaji never cared for Indira. He once told me, "I have known that girl as a child in her mother's arms. She has not grown since the age of two. She has nothing of the father in her."

Nehru included Rajaji in the interim government which assumed office on 2 September 1946 at the instance of Gandhiji, even though at that time Rajaji was particularly unpopular with Congressmen. When the dominion government came on 15 August 1947, Rajaji agreed to Nehru's request to go to West Bengal as Governor, chiefly in view of the deteriorating communal situation there.

After Rajaji's exit from the office of Governor-General, relations between Nehru and Vallabhbhai Patel grew steadily strained. Nehru did not want the deterioration to go further. He missed Gandhiji. After considerable thought he sent a personal appeal to Rajaji to come to Delhi at once. He came promptly and, after a personal talk with Nehru, agreed to join the Cabinet as Minister without Portfolio. His principal function was to hold the peace between Nehru and Patel. He was sworn in on 5 May 1950. After Patel's death, Rajaji succeeded him as Home Minister.

Once Nehru received a personal despatch from K. M. Panikkar, who was our Ambassador in China, complaining that a senior Press Trust of India correspondent was sitting in Hong Kong and sending despatches to India datelined Peking. These despatches were unfavourable to China, containing mostly rumours and gossip. At Nehru's instance I sent for K. S. Ramachandran, head of the PTI in New Delhi, and conveyed to him Nehru's disapproval of the unethical practice. He promised not to release to the press any further despatches from that correspondent who was subsequently withdrawn from Hong Kong. Ramachandran then told me that Rajaji had also sent for him in this connection and told him, "Look, this business of datelining Peking while sitting in Hong Kong is a dangerous thing, because the Chinese will one day produce these despatches in international forums to prove that there is freedom of the press in China. Kill all further despatches from the correspondent." The differing approaches of the two giants give an indication of their respective personalities. One was a noble lion while the other was a wily fox.

Rajaji continued to be in government until a new government was formed in the middle of 1952 after the first general elections.

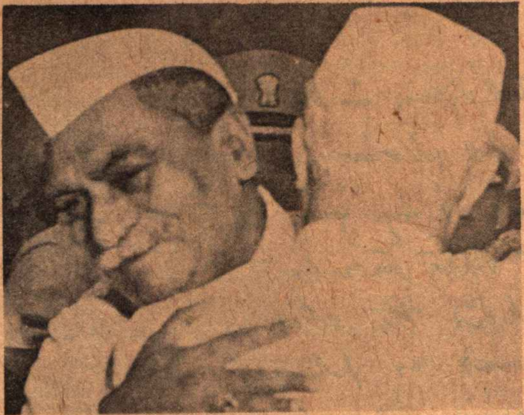
Before he left Delhi I met Rajaji and had a talk with him. He told me that his plan was to write about simple things, such as advice to cyclists and drivers, against spitting on roads and public places, and the like. I smiled. Rajaji asked me, "Are you sceptical?" I said, "Yes. I believe all politicians are like squirrels, and you are no exception." Then I told him the Malayalam proverb: "No matter how old the squirrel is, it will never give up climbing." He laughed.

After parting from Nehru, Rajaji developed hostility towards Nehru's policies. Eventually he formed the Swatantra Party and embarked on a course of attacking Nehru's policies relentlessly. He proved to be a real squirrel. When the Chinese invasion of India took place, Rajaji said of Nehru, "He has made his bed and he must be made to lie on it." Soon after, Rajaji came to Delhi and had a personal talk with Nehru during which, surprisingly enough, he offered to join the Cabinet and help him. Not so surprisingly, Nehru changed the subject by telling him, "You are already helping me a great deal from outside." The old squirrel took the hint and left.

Rajendra Prasad and Radhakrishnan

WHEN the interim government was formed on 2 September 1946, Nehru included Rajendra Prasad on the Council as Member in charge of Food and Agriculture. He was more interested in developing *pinjarapoles* (cow ashrams) than in the development of food production.

Later in the year, in consultation with Gandhiji and Sardar Patel, Nehru, as Congress President, decided to elevate Rajendra Prasad as President of the Constituent Assembly which was to meet on 9 December 1947. Nehru made it known to Rajendra Prasad, whom he called Rajendra Babu, that well before his election as President of the Constituent Assembly he should resign from government because Nehru felt that the President of a sovereign body like the Constituent Assembly should not be a person holding a post



Rajendra Prasad and Nehru.

subordinate to him in government. But Rajendra Prasad resisted. Ultimately Gandhiji intervened. He sent for Rajendra Prasad and spoke to him bluntly in the presence of one of his secretaries, Rajkumari Amrit Kaur. Gandhiji told him, "I had thought that you learned something from me. I was mistaken. You have no right to hold the two offices. In fact you should give up everything and join me." Soon after, Rajendra Prasad sent in a letter of resignation to Nehru couched in such language as to give the impression that it was a spontaneously voluntary act.

Before the republic came into existence, Rajaji was sitting on the throne of the Governor-General of India, once occupied by Warren Hastings, Ripon, Curzon and a host of others. He conducted himself with great dignity and simplicity, and foreigners, particularly the diplomatic corps, were impressed by him. Nehru wanted Rajaji to be the first President. He was anxious to establish a convention that normally, if the Prime Minister was from north India the President should be from the south, and vice-versa. In fact, Nehru impulsively offered the presidency to Rajaji. Nehru did not like the idea of Rajendra Prasad as President because he was very conservative, traditionalist and somewhat obscurantist. He tried to dissuade Rajendra Prasad by offering him the offices of a Cabinet Minister and chairmanship of the Planning Commission. Rajendra Prasad was not interested in the offer. Nehru soon discovered that the bulk of Congress MPs were opposed to Rajaji. Sardar Patel appeared neutral though his preference was known. It was not for Rajaji. If Nehru had stood firm, Rajaji would have been elected; but Nehru disliked taking any important issue to the breaking point. So, ultimately he beat a retreat, leaving Rajaji with an aggrieved feeling of having been let down.

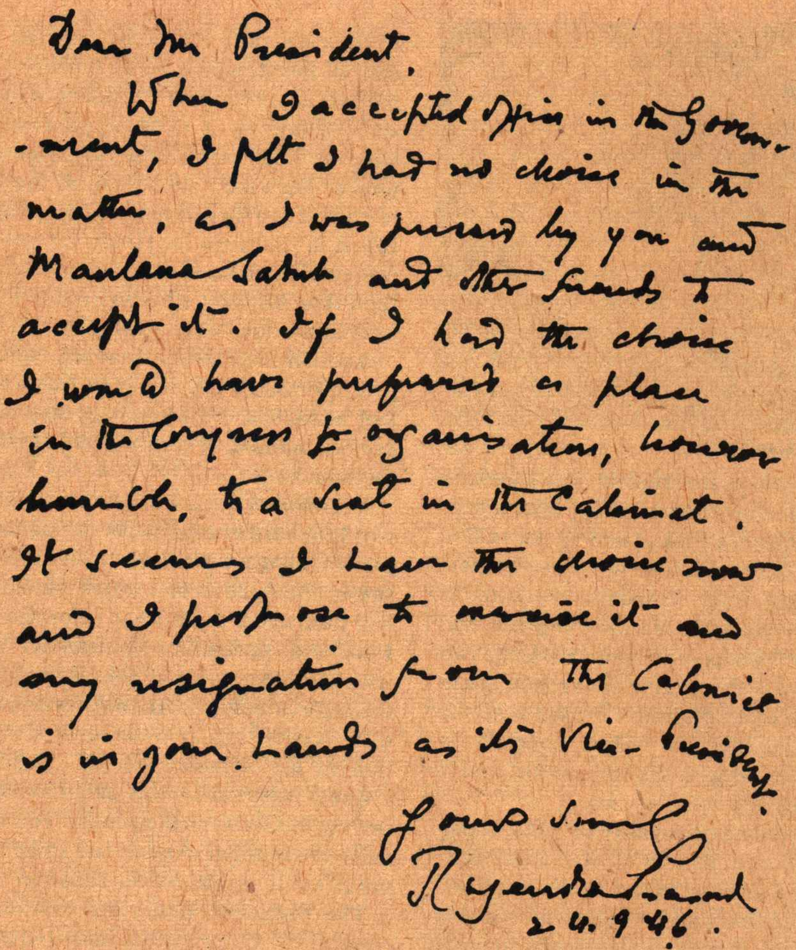
Thus Rajendra Prasad became the first President of the Republic on 26 January 1950. Alas, the first act of the first President of the Republic was the shifting of all Muslim servants from his wing in Rashtrapati Bhawan. Nehru was annoyed. He asked me to get all these Muslims transferred to the government hospitality organization in exchange for Hindu servants. The displaced Muslim servants were detailed to duty in the Prime Minister's house even though the security authorities were unhappy about it.

Another thing which annoyed Nehru was Rajendra Prasad's pilgrimage to Kashi to wash the feet of sadhus. Feet-touching then onwards became sanctified. If Nehru hated anything, it was feet-touching.

Yet another thing which made Nehru unhappy was Rajendra Prasad's visit to Somnath to instal the Shivalingam in the newly built temple on the site of the famous one which Moslem invaders had destroyed. Nehru had information that the Food and Agriculture Minister K. M. Munshi, with the connivance of Sardar Patel, had raised the sugar price and let the mill owners keep half of the price-rise and give the rest for the construction of the Somnath temple. The Sugar Mill Owners Association was only too happy to perpetrate this fraud on the people. This information came to Nehru at a rather late stage when it was not possible to retrieve the situation.

The President, under the transitional provisions of the Constitution, inherited all the financial allotments enjoyed by the Viceroy, including the very substantial entertainment allowance. Successive Presidents have resisted all attempts by parliament to legislate for the emoluments and perquisites of the President. After about five years in office by Rajendra Prasad, the Military Secretary to the President sent me a private note to say that Rajendra Prasad had not spent more than Rs 225 per month on entertainment and that the rest of the grant was drawn by Rajendra Prasad and invested in small savings in the names of his numerous grandchildren. I showed the note to the Prime Minister who incautiously mentioned it at an informal meeting of the Congress Working Committee. Jagjivan Ram reported the matter to Rajendra Prasad who got very annoyed with me.

Soon after T. T. Krishnamachari's budget imposed wealth tax, expenditure tax and gift tax, Rajendra Prasad complained to Nehru about how all these would affect him personally. Nehru then asked him, in a letter in reply, whether the



Dear Mr President,

When I accepted office in the Government, I felt I had no choice in the matter, as I was pressed by you and Maulana Saheb and other friends to accept it. If I had the choice I would have preferred a place in the Congress organisation, however humble, to a seat in the Cabinet. It seems I have the choice now and I propose to exercise it and my resignation from the Cabinet is in your hands as its Vice-President.

Yours sincerely
Rajendra Prasad
24.9.46.

unused part of his entertainment allowance was surrendered to government. This silenced Rajendra Prasad, and he could no longer swell the coffers of his grandchildren.

Early in 1957 Nehru impulsively offered the presidency to the then Vice-President Radhakrishnan. Nehru thought that after seven years in office and at his advanced age, Rajendra Prasad would wish to retire. Rajendra Prasad, however, had other ideas. He was a candidate for re-election for another term of five years. Nehru soon discovered that Pandit Govind Ballabh Pant and most of the provincial Congress leaders, including Kamaraj Nadar, were in favour of Rajendra Prasad's re-election. Again, Nehru, the true democrat, retreated as he was loath to push anything to breaking point. This made Radhakrishnan sour. He did not want to continue as Vice-President. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad ultimately persuaded him to stay on. As a sop to Radhakrishnan, Nehru changed the order in the Warrant of Precedence to make the Vice-President number two. Until then the Vice-President ranked third, after the Prime Minister. Nehru also made the Vice-President entitled to use Indian Air Force VIP aircraft to travel in India. Radhakrishnan was mollified. Nehru asked Radhakrishnan to lead the Indian delegation to UNESCO, and also encouraged him to take increasing interest in the activities of that body. He also arranged for Radhakrishnan to go on goodwill visits to foreign countries.

At one time Nehru suggested to Rajendra Prasad that he might let Radhakrishnan perform some of his ceremonial functions. Rajendra Prasad pointed out that, while he held Radhakrishnan in great esteem and would gladly entrust him with some of his functions, the Constitution did not provide for such a course of action. Rajendra Prasad was right.

At the time of the debate in parliament on the Hindu Code Bill, Rajendra Prasad made it known to MPs that he was personally against it. At this time Rajendra Prasad spoke to Nehru and told him that, according to the Constitution, the President was part of Parliament and that he would like to be in the President's Box in parliament whenever he wished to do so. Nehru firmly put his foot down and told Rajendra Prasad that his being part of parliament only meant that he had to address the joint sessions of both Houses once a year; and that the President's Box in parliament was only a courtesy to accommodate distinguished foreign dignitaries and other guests of the President. Nehru, however, compromised by facilitating the installation of contraptions through which the President, from his study in Rashtrapati Bhawan, could listen to the proceedings in both Houses of parliament. Such contraptions were also installed for Nehru and myself in our offices in Parliament House.

The relationship between the first President and the first Prime Minister was formal. The Prime Minister had a weekly meeting with the President to fulfil the constitutional requirement of keeping the President informed of developments in the government and the country. There was no personal warmth for each other. They were poles apart in their outlook. Rajendra Prasad was somewhat overwhelmed by Nehru's personality. However, Nehru did not fail to show the President all due courtesies; and he was deferential to the President in public.

When Radhakrishnan became President, his relations with Nehru were warm and cordial. Radhakrishnan, with his informal ways, was able to influence Nehru to a fair extent. But it must be said that during the period 1962-64 Nehru was a declining man and afflicted by ill-health.

Nehru once told me that, during the period Radhakrishnan was Indian Ambassador to the Soviet Union, at his first meeting with Marshal Joseph Stalin, he behaved in the most informal manner by greeting Stalin with, "Hullo. How are you?" and patted him on the back. Radhakrishnan did almost the same thing to Queen Elizabeth.

Philosopher, orator and phrase-maker, Radhakrishnan was indisputably the best President India has had so far, representing the best traditions and culture of this ancient land.

The embarrassingly-named Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed was the poorest specimen. By signing the Proclamation of Internal Emergency in June 1975 without Cabinet approval, he amply qualified himself for impeachment. However, it must be said to his credit that he knew when to die.

The Prime Minister's House

WHEN JAWAHARLAL NEHRU accepted office in the interim government on 2 September 1946 he was allotted a four bedroom compact house at 17 York Road. He was happy with that house.

During the pre-partition and post-partition period the situation was abnormal. The threat to Nehru's life was real. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel was a worried man. He spoke to me about the inherent danger and wanted to strengthen police security, however cumbersome and irritating it may be. He wanted me to do whatever was possible to soften Nehru. Soon the grounds of 17 York Road became a sea of police tents.

When Nehru became Prime Minister, security arrangements were further tightened. Police tents also sprang up outside on the road. The whole place became a grotesque police camp. To me it became obvious that Nehru should shift from 17 York Road. In the spring of 1948, with the concurrence of Sardar Patel, I got in touch with Lord Mountbatten and discussed the matter with him. He told me that the solution lay in Nehru moving into the Commander-in-Chief's house where security arrangments would not look so provocative. I requested him not to broach the subject with Nehru, but to leave the matter to me. I added that in a matter like this, the best procedure was to create a situation in which Nehru would have no choice. He agreed.

I reported back to Sardar Patel and requested him to speak to Nehru. Sardar Patel walked into Nehru's house one morning (he lived next door) and had a talk with him. He appealed to the PM to shift to the C-in-C's house. He told Nehru that he was already weighed down with deep sorrow at his failure to protect Gandhiji. He made it clear to Nehru that he was not prepared to take the responsibility for his safety. There was a veiled threat also—that he would resign if Nehru did not comply.

On walking back to his house, Sardar Patel beckoned to me. I walked with him. He told me, "Jawaharlal kept quiet and his facial expressions showed he did not like to shift; but we must take his silence as consent. You go ahead and work out the details with Mountbatten."

In consultation with me, Mountbatten drew up a note for the Cabinet for the redesignation of the C-in-C's house as the Prime Minister's house and for the setting up of the government hospitality organization in the PM's house along the lines of Government House. This became a necessity particularly because Indira was feckless in running a household. She did not even know how to boil an egg. What is worse, she couldn't care less. According to the arrangement worked out, the Prime Minister was to pay for himself, his family and personal guests on the basis of actual expenditure. On my advice, Mountbatten took the unusual step of circumventing the Prime Minister and sending the note directly to the Cabinet Secretary directing him to circulate it to all Cabinet Ministers, including the Prime Minister, without the prior approval of the PM, for discussion at a meeting to be notified later. When he got the papers in circulation, Nehru asked me, "Were you also behind this without telling me anything about it?" I said, "Yes, 95 per cent." He smiled.

The matter came up before the Cabinet at its meeting on 7 June 1948 at 10 A.M. Nehru kept quiet. That meeting was virtually conducted by Sardar Patel. The Cabinet accepted the proposals contained in Mountbatten's note.

Nehru was not at all happy about shifting to a big house. After he actually shifted, he refused to draw the tax-free entertainment allowance of Rs 500 per month to which he and the Cabinet Ministers were entitled.

Some of the prominent Cabinet Ministers, particularly N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar, suggested that, as in the United Kingdom, the PM's salary should be double that of other Cabinet Ministers, But Nehru refused to entertain the suggestion. He also turned down the suggestion that, as in the UK, an Act should be passed in parliament providing for a substantial pension and other facilities and perquisites to the PM on retirement.

I am afraid Nehru was subjective in these matters. He thought of only himself. His magnificent pride rebelled. He was confident of making a comfortable living by his facile pen. He told me so. I told Nehru that in the interest of a poor man who might succeed him as PM, he should let parliament enact such a measure and that he personally need not avail himself of the facilities. But he remained too subjective in regard to this matter. In this connection I must say that Nehru was one of the most inexpensive persons in so far as personal requirements were concerned. It is open to the present parliament to enact a suitable measure to provide for a retiring PM.

The existing Act provides for a salary of Rs 3,000 per month for a Cabinet Minister and an entertainment allowance of Rs 500 per month. In Nehru's time he and the ministers voluntarily effected a cut and brought down the salary first to Rs 2,250 per month and then to Rs 2,000 per month. Since then the value of the rupee has come down to 25 paise. There is a strong case for not only restoring the cuts but also enhancing the emoluments of ministers. To quote Gandhiji in this connection is sheer doublethink. Ministers and civil servants should be adequately paid to keep them above want and free them from temptations. The people of India will not grudge it.

It was a mistake to have converted the Prime Minister's house (now called Teen Murti House) to Jawarharlal Nehru Museum. Thirteen years have passed since the conversion and people have got used to it as a memorial to Nehru. It will be another mistake to reconvert it into the Prime Minister's house. Prime Minister Morarji has assured me that he has no desire to move into Teen Murti House because it will offend the sentiments of millions of people. Even now an average of 1,000 people visit the Nehru Museum daily.

The now Works and Housing Minister Sikander Bahkt has been saying profound things about a mansion for the Prime Minister. I am afraid he lives in a bygone age.

At 10 Downing Street, the British Prime Minister has only a couple of suites of rooms for his personal use. All the rest are offices and a few are public rooms.

Tage Erlander, the Social Democratic Prime Minister of affluent Sweden, for twenty years lived in a three room flat. His wife was a teacher. I happened to known them both. The Swedish Government did not provide him with a car. The PM and his wife had a small car which they drove themselves. They could not afford to keep a driver.

Labour Prime Minister Joseph Chiefley of rich Australia lived in two rooms in a second class hotel near his office. His wife preferred to live on their farm as she did not wish to get involved in the social whirl of Canberra. The PM was not provided with a car. He walked between his hotel and his office. I met him more than once in London. He was a most lovable and humble man.

People like Sikander Bahkt are victims of outmoded ideas of oriental splendour.

Feroze Gandhi

SON of a Parsi liquor and provision merchant of Allahabad, Feroze Gandhi in his early days attached himself to Kamala Nehru as a Congress volunteer. He used to accompany her as a helper wherever she went on Congress work in the Allahabad area. He could not be accused of possessing any eagerness for studies. Throughout his life he retained the handwriting of a child.

Towards the end of December 1935 at Badenweiler in Germany, Kamala Nehru had a talk with her husband in the presence of their common friend Nanu (A. C. N. Nambiar). Death for Kamala was only two months away. She said that she was profoundly worried about the future of Indira. She expressed her strongest disapproval of the possibility of Indira marrying Feroze Gandhi. She did not consider Feroze Gandhi a stable person; neither did she think that he was in the least qualified to go into any worthwhile profession and support Indira. She spoke with emotion and became tired. With some effort she managed to add, "I do not want my child to be unhappy all her life." Nehru spoke in a soothing and reassuring manner and said, "You leave the matter to me." A few minutes later Nehru went out. Kamala turned to Nanu and said, "You heard what he said; Indu will listen to no one except me. I could have guided Indu gently away from Feroze. But my end is near. Jawahar will give no guidance to Indu. She will ultimately be allowed to commit the mistake of her life."

Some time before Kamala Nehru's death on 28 February 1936, while Indira was still a student in England, Feroze Gandhi managed to get some financial assistance from one of his aunts and went to London. His "studies" in London constituted a standing joke among Indians there.

Like many other Indian students in England, Indira managed to return to India by ship after the second world war broke out. Feroze Gandhi was also back. In 1941 Indira spoke to her father about her wish to marry Feroze Gandhi. Nehru remembered what his wife had told him at Badenweiler and gave her good advice against the marriage. All the members of the Nehru family were also against the marriage. Neither they nor Nehru could reconcile themselves to the idea of Indira marrying the son of a local liquor and provision merchant. And, what was worse, the boy was not qualified to enter any worthwhile profession to earn his livelihood. As opposition to the marriage persisted, Indira adopted a truculent attitude. She told her father that she had no roots in India and that she was going to leave the country. Nehru was deeply hurt. He conveyed this to Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit and Padmaja Naidu who happened to be in Allahabad. Padmaja Naidu expressed the view that in the ultimate analysis the father had no right to stand in the way of a daughter who was a major. Reluctantly, Nehru gave his permission.

For some inexplicable reason, Nehru allowed the marriage to be performed according to Vedic rites in 1942. An interreligious and intercaste marriage under Vedic rites at that time was not valid in law. To be legal, it had to be a civil marriage. So, strictly under the law, Indira was only a "concubine" and her children are "bastards."

Soon after the marriage, Nehru had Feroze Gandhi appointed as the Managing Director of the Associated Journals Ltd which owned the *National Herald, Navjivan* and *Quami Awaz*. This had disastrous consequences.

In the meantime, Feroze Gandhi continued to do some work as an insurance agent and eked out an existence.

At Nehru's instance, UP Chief Minister Govind Ballabh Pant saw to it that Feroze Gandhi was elected to the Constituent Assembly when it was constituted in December 1946. After that he divided his time between Delhi and Lucknow. He was elected to the first Lok Sabha in the 1951-52 general elections and continued to be an MP till his death in 1961.

In 1947 Feroze Gandhi fell in love with one of Mrs Pandit's daughters working as an apprentice journalist in the *National Herald* at Lucknow. On hearing this, Mrs Pandit made an air-dash to India from Moscow at her own expense and took away the girl to Moscow.

Two instances of what Nehru had said in private at the dining table leaked out and caused embarrassment. These were traced to Feroze Gandhi. Since that time Nehru rarely opened his mouth at mealtimes if Feroze Gandhi was present. Even time, the great healer, did not help Nehru to become wholly reconciled to his daughter, and only child, being married to Feroze Gandhi. Neither did developments after the marriage provide any cementing factor.

Some time in 1948, Minister of Health Rajkumari Amrit Kaur told me that in her presence Feroze Gandhi had told a group of MPs in the Central Hall of parliament that "M. O. Mathai is the Prime Minister's son-in-law" and not he. Some MPs later thought that Feroze Gandhi had said this because I was with Nehru all the time, even in the car in which he travelled between his offices and residence, and the fact that I was staying in the Prime Minister's house.

Feroze Gandhi had another romantic interlude. This time it was the daughter of a Muslim minister of the UP government. The girl was working in the All India Radio in New Delhi. They decided to marry. Feroze Gandhi spoke to Indira about his intention. She told him that she had no objection. He said he wanted the custody of the first child. She firmly refused to consider this. The same evening he left a brief note on Nehru's desk in his study at the PM's house. In the note he said, "This time it is all my fault." Nehru sent for him after dinner and let him have his say. The next morning, after breakfast, Nehru took Indira to his study and told her that Feroze Gandhi had had a talk with him the previous night. He did not reveal to her all that transpired. However, Nehru asked her one question, "Have you anyone else in view?" She replied in the negative. In the evening Indira reported everything to me and complained that her father was not frank with her. As a daughter she expected him to tell her everything Feroze Gandhi had told him. I told her that it was obvious that her father did not wish to repeat anything and create further misunderstandings.

When the news of the romantic developments surrounding his daughter reached Lucknow, the Muslim minister was perturbed. He frantically came to Delhi and took his daughter away.

Soon after this incident Feroze Gandhi shifted to his MP's quarters.

After his exit from the *National Herald*, a job was found for Feroze Gandhi by Rafi Ahmed Kidwai in the *Indian Express*. Soon after Rafi's death, information reached Nehru that Ramnath Goenka, the proprietor of *Indian Express*, had told someone that he gave the job to Feroze Gandhi because Rafi had told him that it would lead to the lessening of Nehru's financial burden; and that it was for the same reason that a second large Austin car was also allotted to Feroze Gandhi for the personal use of Indira. The Prime Minister asked me to question Ramnath Goenka about it. I did so and Goenka confirmed that the information which reached the Prime Minister was entirely correct. I told him that the large Austin car was never used by Indira. I reported to the PM the substance of my conversation with Goenka. He was visibly upset. I told him that Goenka had issued instructions to withdraw the large Austin car. I also told him that it was inadvisable to take any further step in the matter at that stage.

After Feroze Gandhi's virulent attack on T. T. Krishnamachari in parliament in the "Mundhra" case and TTK's resignation from government, Ramnath Goenka, who was a personal friend of TTK's, terminated Feroze Gandhi's services with the *Indian Express*.

The misgivings of Kamala Nehru expressed in anguish on her deathbed had come true in full measure.

More on Nehru

IN HIS early years in office, Nehru lacked knowledge of statecraft as practised in modern times. That is why he declared India's intention to hold a plebiscite in Kashmir. It served no purpose except to provide a handle to Pakistan. Then, like Woodrow Wilson, Nehru went about offering a referendum each in the French and Portuguese possessions in India. These were impulsive off the cuff pronouncements. There was no referendum in India for British withdrawal. Looking back, one is entitled to doubt if a referendum in Goa would have gone in favour of India.

Nehru was, to a large extent, responsible for the organization of Pradesh Congress Committees on a linguistic basis during the freedom struggle. For example, Madras Presidency had four Pradesh Congress Committees—Tamil Nadu Congress Committee, Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee, Kannada Pradesh Congress Committee, and Malayala Pradesh Congress Committee. To a considerable extent he was influenced in this by the Soviet system which even provided for secession of federating republics and autonomous regions. What Nehru forgot was that if any Soviet constituent unit tried to secede, it would have been crushed ruthlessly and masses of people transported to Siberia. We know what happened to the sovereign state of Czechoslovakia. When revolt occurred there, the Soviet Union propounded a new theory of "limited sovereignty" for "socialist countries" and intervened with massive force and suppressed the uprising mercilessly.

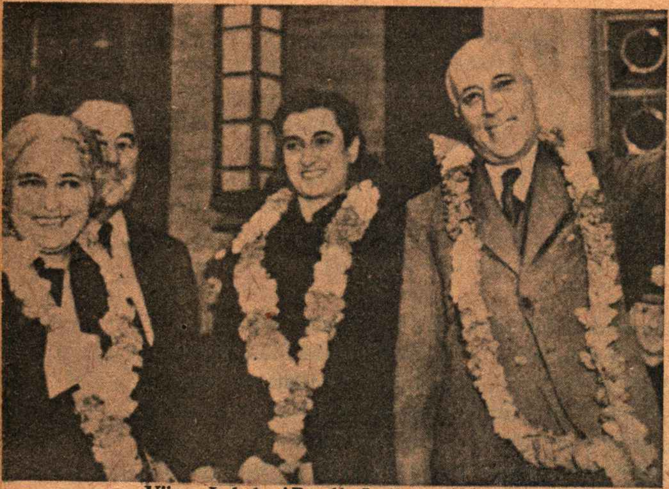
The States Reorganization Commission was the inevitable result of organizing linguistic Pradesh Congress Committees. When the report of the commission was received, Nehru was in favour of keeping Hyderabad as a separate entity mostly due to its composite culture. But he really had no choice in the matter. Nehru was in favour of splitting up U P and Bihar into smaller manageable states; but Govind Ballabh Pant talked him out of it. Pant's only argument was, "How can the land of the Ganga and the Jamuna be cut up?"

After decisions were taken on the States Reorganization Commission recommendations, some people from Kerala approached Nehru saying that they did not want a separate state and would like it to be part of Tamil Nadu or Mysore (later to be known as Karnataka). Like a drowning man clutching at a straw, Nehru seriously made the proposal to Kamaraj who said the equivalent of *parkalam* (will see). He had no intention of seeing anything. Then Nehru spoke to Nijalingappa who promised to consult his colleagues. Actually he had no intention of consulting anyone. In fact he told me, "Why should we have a cancerous growth on our body?"

Whenever I went to London with the PM, I was invited to spend a weekend with Aneurin Bevan and his wife Jennie Lee at their farm in Chesham. On one occasion, sipping coffee and cognac after dinner, Bevan talked about Nehru for whom he had great admiration. He said that Nehru was too much of a refined man to be a Communist who is normally associated with coarseness and ruthlessness. He also said that Nehru was too much of a democrat to be a radical Socialist. Jennie Lee asked, "Then how will you describe Nehru?" Bevan replied, "Nehru is, without doubt, the last of the great British Liberals—and something more, a man of great compassion."

Nehru had no use for any form of organized religion which only repelled him. However, he was not irreligious. He used to carry in his satchel a copy of the *Light of Asia*, Bhagavad Gita, the four Gospels, Asoka's Edicts, and the UN Charter—all in tiny editions.

Before the Chinese invasion, when trouble loomed large on the horizon, Krishna Menon made an extraordinarily foolish statement, "We won't send a postcard to the Pentagon." But on 19 November 1962 Nehru sent a frantic telegraphic message to President Kennedy requesting air cover. The copy of this message was not filed in the PM's secretariat, or the Ministry of



Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, Indira and Nehru in Washington, 1948.

External Affairs. It is in the "file at home" papers which I started in the PM's house years ago. In response to Nehru's request, an American aircraft carrier was on its way to the Bay of Bengal. Lal Bahadur was not aware of Nehru's appeal when he, as the new PM, answered a question in parliament contradicting a statement in Sudhir Ghosh's book *Gandhi's Emissary*. Sudhir Ghosh had written that Nehru had asked for an aircraft carrier and that it was positioned in the Bay of Bengal. Technically, Lal Bahadur was right; but in substance he was wrong.

Professor J. K. Galbraith, in his book *Ambassador's Journal* wrote on 5 January 1963:

> M. J. Desai told me about Indian thinking on containment of the Chinese. They are willing to work with the United States, both politically and militarily, in the rest of Asia. This is *quid pro quo* for our assistance and quite a remarkable advance. Nehru, a week ago, hinted that their thoughts were moving in this direction.

M. J. Desai, who was Secretary-General of the Ministry of External Affairs, happened to meet me around that time and related to me what he had told Galbraith and added that he did so with the PM's full knowledge and approval. When I met the PM soon after that, I asked him about it and he confirmed what M. J. Desai had told me.

When Galbraith's book was published, the passage quoted above was hotly contested by some left wing Congressmen and others in parliament. Little did they know that Nehru never considered nonalignment as an eternal verity. He, in fact, did not like the word when it was first coined. He adopted it because he could not think of a better single word. Nonalignment was never a fetish with him as it is with some "progressive" politicians of little consequence.

On 13 November 1962 Ambassador Galbraith wrote to President Kennedy, "All his life Nehru has sought to avoid being dependent on the United States and the United Kingdom—most of his personal reluctance to ask (or thank) for aid has been based on this pride. Now nothing is so important to him, more personally than politically, than to maintain the semblance of this independence." Galbraith is substantially correct.

I could never reconcile myself to two very unwise statements of Nehru's. After the completion of his talks with the young President Kennedy in Washington in 1962, he was asked at a press conference how he got on with the President. The American pressmen were giving a chance to Nehru to say something gracious about their President who was an admirer of Nehru and had singled him out for respectful reference in his inaugural address to the joint session of Congress. But quick came the most unfortunately worded reply, "I get on with all kinds of people!"

The other statement was in parliament after it was belatedly made known that the Chinese had completed the construction of the Aksai-Chin road across Ladakh in Indian territory. Nehru in his speech described the area as one "where not a blade of grass grows." No blade of grass grows on the vast stretches of the Arabian desert underneath which lies untold wealth in "black gold." We do not know yet what the bowels of the bleak and inhospitable regions of the Himalayas hold.

Nehru was never vindictive. He did not believe in hounding people. I can remember only two instances of his publicly castigating individual Congressmen. One was Gopichand Bhargava of Punjab whom he called "a man lacking in political integrity." The other was D. P. Mishra about whom he said at a public meeting in Jabalpur during the 1951-52 general elections, "I want to warn the people of Madhya Pradesh against the activities of Dwarka Prasad Mishra." Years later, Indira and Mishra became thick as thieves as mutual supporters when it suited them.

Nehru was conscious of his good looks, proud of his shapely head, his perfect nose and his "runner's feet." After a very tiring day, he would have his bath and come to dinner as a rejuvenated man. His powers of recuperation were immense.

Govind Ballabh Pant

A DESCENDANT of Maharashtrian Brahmans settled in Almora under the patronage of the Maharaja of Kumaon before the advent of the British, Pantji became a successful lawyer and a leading figure in the national movement. He became the first Chief Minister of UP and remained in that capacity until early 1955 when he came over to Delhi.

In September 1954, having seen Kailas Nath Katju as a supremely ineffective Home Minister, I suggested to the PM that he might persuade Pantji to come over to the centre. The PM was gruff with me and said, "I have asked him several times; he never said yes or no; I am not going to ask him again; you go and talk to him if you like." So I went to Lucknow early in October 1954. Before going I spoke to the PM who told me that if Pantji was prepared to come, he could have as his portfolio Finance, Defence or Home. From Lucknow Pantji took me to Naini Tal where we had some quiet talks. Ultimately he agreed to come. He said he was most reluctant to take up Finance because central finance was vastly different from state finance (he was also Finance Minister of UP) and at his age he would not like to study the intricacies of high finance. He was also not enthusiastic about Defence. He added that Home was his natural portfolio. He extracted a promise from me that I would help him until he found his feet in labyrinthine Delhi. Thus, on 10 January 1955, Pantji was sworn in as Union Home Minister. Katju went over to Defence.

When I returned from Naini Tal, Lal Bahadur came to see me. He was eager to know if I had succeeded where the PM had failed. He was not too happy when I told him that Pantji was coming and that he should be of considerable assistance to the PM. Lal Bahadur said, "You may be disappointed."

After Pantji's arrival in Delhi, he used to visit me almost every evening for about six months in my study in the PM's house, on his way back from his evening drive, and talk with me for half an hour. I had to find a wide chair to be put in my study to accommodate Pantji's elephantine frame. I had already asked the Cabinet Secretary to see Pantji frequently and brief him generally.

One day Pantji told me that he was finding it difficult to travel in commercial planes because of his unwieldy bulk. In UP he had the use of a flying club plane; he did not like to travel by train. He asked me if anything could be done in this matter. I spoke to the PM and suggested that Maulana Azad and Pantji might also be put on the list of persons entitled to use IAF planes of the VIP squadron for official purposes. The PM agreed and appropriate instructions were issued to the Defence Ministry. I knew about Pantji's proverbial unpunctuality. When I conveyed to Pantji the news about the arrangements for him, I told him that the IAF people are sticklers for punctuality and that he would have to observe their timings strictly as, otherwise, he wouldn't find them at the airport. Pantji was not a great traveller. With the IAF he observed punctuality.

One evening Pantji was in a gay, jovial and mischievous mood. He spoke to me about the most important characteristic of a wise and civilized man. He said, "If a man finds his wife in bed with another man, he should disappear without making any sound; the next time he sees her, he should be very pleasant and convey his profoundest and undying love to her." I dismissed the subject by asking him, "How many people can do that?"

After Pantji became Home Minister, the PM directed successive Finance Ministers to discuss the budget personally with the former before coming to the PM. In the absence of the PM from India, matters relating to External Affairs were referred to Maulana Azad and those relating to economic and internal affairs to Pantji. Maulana Azad presided over Cabinet meetings. All important matters, however, were referred to the PM by code telegrams wherever he was. After the Maulana's death, it was all Pantji.

In 1956, after his resignation from the Cabinet on 24 July in protest against the exclusion of Bombay city from Maharashtra under the States Reorganization Bill, C. D. Deshmukh carried on an unseemly attack on Pantji, accusing him of corruption, and publicly stated that he was prepared to give evidence before a judicial commission. Deshmukh also detailed his charges against Pantji. Nehru was upset and annoyed. He requested S. R. Das, retired Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of India, to go into the charges. In a personal talk with me Pantji said that he was deeply grieved that towards the fag end of his life of service and sacrifice for the nation, he should be subjected to such humiliation by a small fellow "who was no more than a today of the British and, after independence a desiccated calculating machine." He added, "But for my admiration, affection and loyalty for Jawaharlalji, I would have resigned and gone away from Delhi." Justice S. R. Das, who went into the allegations against Pantji, completely exonerated him; and Deshmukh made a monkey of himself in the process. Both Deshmukh and Pantji shared the trait of vindictiveness. Pantji had the size, memory and vindictiveness of an elephant.

During Pantji's tenure as Home Minister, the Maharaja of Dholpur died without an heir. I suggested to the PM that the theory of lapse might be applied as was done in some cases during British times. The PM wrote to Pantji more than once on the subject. The Maharaja of Nabha, whose wife was the daughter of the departed ruler of Dholpur, appeared on the scene to press the claim of his second minor son to succeed to the Dholpur throne. The Maharaja of Nabha was seeing Pantji's son-in-law more frequently during this period than was good for the latter. Eventually Pantji persuaded himself to support the claim of the Nabha infant.

In view of the PM's letters on the subject, Pantji was hesitant. He spoke to me about the matter and put forth certain unconvincing and specious arguments in favour of the Nabha infant. He suggested that I might speak to the PM. I replied that in such a matter it was appropriate that he himself should talk to the PM. He was reluctant. I had no intention of pulling his chestnut out of the fire. Finding that I was reluctant, he waited for a couple of weeks and then saw the PM. Later, I was to discover that the PM had reluctantly acquiesced in Pantji's proposal. In the process Pantji's son-in-law earned a bad name, and tongues wagged against Pantji also.

Despite Lal Bahadur's prediction, Pantji continued to be a tower of strength to the PM until his death, which Nehru mourned by not attending any formal social functions in London where he had gone rather belatedly to attend a meeting of the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference. Nehru had great affection, regard, and respect for Pantji—the Tiger of Kumaon.

Kamaraj

BEAUTIFULLY BLACK as ebony, with lips like those of an anteater, Kamaraj always reminded me of *Homo Erectus*, the earliest generally accepted representative of the genus man, which was widespread in Asia, Africa and Europe 500,000 years ago. An anthropologist seeing Kamaraj for the first time might have had second thoughts about the place of origin of man and might have concluded that man originated in India and not in Africa. An American, who had a wry sense of humour, once remarked that Kamaraj's mother must have been an inkpot.

A member of the Nadar community who were toddy-tappers like the Eazhavas of Kerala, Kamaraj became a protege of the late S. Satyamurti, to whom he remained loyal, and entered the national movement as a Congress volunteer. With little formal education, Kamaraj could speak only Tamil. This remained a handicap throughout his life. He managed to learn enough English to understand a conversation in that language. He refused to learn Hindi. Privately he remained an anti-Brahman in spite of his loyalty to Satyamurti. In this and in his opposition to Hindi, he was as strong as any DMK leader in Tamil Nadu. His anti-Brahmanism, however, was confined within the borders of Tamil Nadu.

By dint of hard work, total dedication to the cause and the help of Satyamurti, Kamaraj soon rose in the Congress hierarchy and became President of the Tamil Nadu Congress Committee.

He was a strong opponent of Rajaji and in this he did not hesitate to defy even Gandhiji. For a long time Kamaraj remained aloof from the corridors of power in Tamil Nadu. He preferred to pull strings from behind the scenes.

Kamaraj, who remained a bachelor, led a simple life which never changed with acceptance of office or when he became the powerful Congress President and king-maker after Nehru's time. But he had a benefactor in a Tamil Christian who had extensive business interests in Kerala. From this man Kamaraj took judicious financial assistance for himself, his mother and his dependent sister. Eventually Kamaraj rewarded his benefactor by getting him elected to parliament. I knew the man well.

In the fifties, Kamaraj was persuaded to accept office as Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. He was already a member of the Congress Working Committee. During his tenure as Chief Minister he never charged government the travelling and other expenses when he came primarily to attend Congress Working Committee meetings in Delhi even though he attended to a great deal of work for the Government of Tamil Nadu while in Delhi. He was perhaps the only Chief Minister to be so meticulous in this matter.

Soon after the Chinese invasion of India, Kamaraj expressed to the PM his desire to give up as Chief Minister and devote all his time for organizational work. He knew that the DMK was gaining considerable ground in Tamil Nadu. Nehru, by that time, was an ill man. Indira and C. Subramaniam took up the thread where Kamaraj left off and the Kamaraj Plan was hatched. Nehru gave in and accepted it. Kamaraj and a number of politically important people, and some not so important, resigned from government. In the chapter "Lal Bahadur" I have referred to the circumstances under which both Morarji Desai and Lal Bahadur got out. It was clear to all but the credulous that the Kamaraj Plan was a plot primarily to get rid of some inconvenient people.

Soon Nehru got Kamaraj elected as the Congress President, in which capacity the functioned no more than as a Congress volunteer while Nehru was alive. Kamaraj had an awe of Nehru.

Kamaraj blossomed forth as a fixer and king-maker after Nehru's death. In the chapter "Lal Bahadur" I have referred to the circumstances under which Lal Bahadur became the PM and the part Kamaraj played in it.

After Lal Bahadur's death, Kamaraj and other bosses chose to support Indira against Morarji for the leadership of the Congress Party in parliament. The ostensible reason Kamaraj gave was, "She will attract votes like a magnet." The fact is that the bosses did not want a strong man. Radhakrishnan's comment to an Egyptian editor about Indira's election was, "We can see a beautiful face every morning in the newspapers." Radhakrishnan thought very poorly of Indira's intellectual capacity and general competence. He told me so. He also told me that one of the things he regretted most in his life was his recommendation made during Nehru's lifetime to send her as a delegate to UNESCO and to get her elected to its governing body. He said that Indira proved to be an utter flop in Paris.

When the Indian rupee was devalued in a drastic manner under the Indira regime, the media blared out the advantages of devaluation and that it would have no effect on domestic prices. Kamaraj was very upset at the devaluation. The next morning he found that the price of brinjals had gone up. To everyone who saw him those days he was full of brinjals. About this time Kamaraj happened to see me in a friend's house. He spoke to me bitterly against Indira. He related to me what Indira had said about him to someone whose word he would not question. She said, "Who wants to talk to Kamaraj? He is such a bore." I told him that she was the type that would kick the ladder by which she climbed. He nodded agreement. Then he came out with devaluation and brinjals, and commented in Tamil, "*chinna pennikku moolai illai*," meaning the little girl has no brains. I said, "My dear fellow, you have discovered it too late. She has no understanding of economic affairs. Arithmetic had always been one of her weak points. I do not think even now she can add two and two and make four. She does not know the difference between an acre and a hectare. Why do you blame her? You have to blame yourself," Kamaraj kept quiet.

And then came the 1967 general elections. Kamaraj's illusion that Indira would be a magnet to attract votes proved to be a mirage. Congress lost in many states and in parliament also the party position became precarious. The Kamaraj Plan lay shattered and exposed. Tamil Nadu was lost to the Congress. Kamaraj himself got defeated in the election to the legislative assembly by an unknown student. The once powerful Congress President limped back to Delhi. He was a doubly defeated man, helpless to direct the course of events. He did not want Indira as the

Prime Minister any more. In the interest of the battered party he also did not want a contest for leadership. Indira's position was also not strong in the party. Kamaraj ultimately persuaded Morarji Desai not to contest. He told Morarji, "You go in; otherwise she will make a further mess of things." He extracted an agreement from Indira to designate Morarji as Deputy PM—an honorific without power.

Kamaraj was hurt by the editorial of a prominent scribe in Delhi who wrote, "Hand Over and Go."

Later Kamaraj got himself elected to the Lok Sabha in a by-election. Subsequently he was succeeded as Congress President by Nijalingappa who looked like a bullfrog and was very much of an indecisive man.

Kamaraj lived to receive further insults from the "*chinna pennu*" (little girl) whom he had built up, and died a disillusioned, broken and unhappy man.

Lal Bahadur

Humility is a good thing, but overhumility is near to crookedness; silence is a virtue, but undue silence bespeaks a deceitful mind.—Chinese Proverb

LAL BAHADUR had plenty of reasons to be humble; but he need not have shown overhumility. In his early days he was a Congress volunteer hanging around Anand Bhawan in Allahabad. He was a shrewd dwarf of a man who never offended anyone. Once an elderly Congress woman told me, "Whenever I see little Lal Bahadur, I feel like placing him on my lap and feeding him with some milk."

He started his official career as a Parliamentary Secretary in the first UP government under Govind Ballabh Pant. Later Pantji promoted him to the Cabinet and give him the innocuous Police portfolio. Lal Bahadur generally kept away from groups in the Congress.

Early in September 1951, when Nehru took over as Congress President, consequent on the resignation of Purushottamdas Tandon, and the AICC was in the doldrums with feverish preparations being made to gear up the organization for the impending general elections, I suggested to Nehru to have Lal Bahadur and U. S. Malliah as the General Secretaries at the AICC. He asked me to ring up Lal Bahadur in Lucknow and give him a hint and, in any event, ask him to come to Delhi at once after speaking to Pantji. Lal Bahadur came and took over as one of the General Secretaries. He was invited to stay in the PM's house. He stayed in the room opposite mine. During that period I had great sympathy for him, mostly because he worked long hours like me and took his meals at odd times. At that time he was afraid of that Amazon Mridula Sarabhai and asked for my protection in dealing with her. I asked him, whenever he had trouble with her, to report to me and I assured him that I would put him right with the PM. I advised him to ignore her as much as possible.

I did not particularly like the way Lal Bahadur was dealing with the PM. He would try to find out what was likely to please the PM and act accordingly. Once I told him that he should change his approach and added, "You place facts before him and you will find that in ninety-nine per cent of the cases his reaction will be sound." He replied, "Mathai Sahib, I know you don't want anything from Panditji; you can even scold him; but I am a humble political worker and I cannot afford to adopt your approach." He continued to be a calculating man.

Nehru and Sri Prakasa stood for election in 1951-52 from adjoining constituencies in Allahabad district—Nehru from Phulpur and Sri Prakasa from the city proper. Lal Bahadur was put in charge of the election campaign in both. After the election Lal Bahadur joined the Union Cabinet as Minister of Railways and was soon elected to the Rajya Sabha in 1952.

Lal Bahadur's resignation from the Cabinet after the railway accident, when the second general election was round the corner, was not wholly free from political motives for the future. For many ordinary Congress MPs, Lal Bahadur had put on a halo.

In the second general election in 1956 Lal Bahadur got elected to the Lok Sabha and returned to the Cabinet, this time as Minister for Commerce and Industry. Both in the Railways and in his new ministry, Lal Bahadur's performance was less than average. He was a fence-sitter with a sterile mind. As regards Congress organizational matters, however, he was a first-class man in secondclass politics. During those years, whenever I thought of Lal Bahadur, the story of a famous Chinese poet used to come to my mind. The poet was, thank heavens, one who loved the good things of life. One evening he was drunk and got into a tiny boat and rowed to the middle of the yellow river in bright moonlight. There he saw the reflection of the full moon in the water. Like all poets and a few other species "he was all imagination compact." He imagined and passionately believed that the reflection of the moon was the woman he had wanted all his life. He laid down the oar and bent down with outstretched hands to embrace the beloved woman. Alas, the boat capsized and he was drowned. Before his death, this delightful man had left behind in writing a profound truth fit to be considered as one of the eternal verities, "Myself having been brilliant and clever and made a mess of my life in the conventional sense of the word, the one ambition left in me is that my only son and heir should grow up as a mediocre so that he will end up as an Ambassador and a Cabinet Minister." How true of our own ministers who "strut and fret their hour upon the stage" and torment people by speaking on every conceivable subject about which they know nothing!

In the execution of the controversial Kamaraj Plan Nehru did not want Lal Bahadur to go. This episode was related to me by Lal Bahadur himself. But a wise man, whose identity I do not wish to disclose now, told Nehru, who was an ill man then, that either Lal Bahadur and Morarji Desai should go out together or both should stay in the Cabinet. He added that if Morarji alone was sent out, it would be obvious to the public that it was an unprincipled Chanakyan plan for throwing out Morarji who, in the process, would only acquire sympathy and support. That is how Lal Bahadur got out. But after Nehru suffered a stroke in Bhubaneswar, he recalled Lal Bahadur as Minister without Portfolio for the ostensible purpose of assisting the PM. With a room in the External Affairs Ministry, Lal Bahadur spent the most frustrating time of his life till the death of Nehru. All important matters were taken to Nehru by the Cabinet Secretary and the senior Secretaries of the External Affairs Ministry while Indira would be hanging around. All that Lal Bahadur got was some reports and other reading material submitted to him by the Deputy Secretaries of the External Affairs Ministry. During this period Lal Bahadur complained to me bitterly about Indira. He also told me with a measure of sadness, "I miss you terribly. If you were with Panditji, things would have been different." Even in his precarious physical condition Nehru was not inclined to delegate. He ought to have told the Cabinet Secretary and the senior officials of the External Affairs Ministry to take up all matters with Lal Bahadur and put up to him only such matters as they or Lal Bahadur thought should finally be cleared by the PM. He did nothing of the kind because throughout his life he had, as is said in a Chinese proverb, "a secondrate man's belief that you must do everything yourself to have it well done."

Even before Nehru's death on 27 May 1964 the bosses of the Congress, particularly Kamaraj, Atulya Ghosh, C. B. Gupta, and S. K. Patil, with Sanjeeva Reddy on the periphery, had decided upon Lal Bahadur to succeed Nehru as the PM. They did not want a strong man like Morarji Desai. In fact Nehru had given an indication of his preference by recalling Lal Bahadur to government after his stroke. Indira very much wanted Acting Prime Minister Gulzarilal Nanda to be confirmed as PM. Nobody that mattered would look at him, and Indira was a person of no particular consequence then.

So, little Lal Bahadur became the PM. The popular joke at that time was that India deserved a man as the PM and not a mouse. About ten days after Lal Bahadur took over as the PM, N. R. Pillai took me out to the cinema. The newsreel shown that day included the scene of Lal Bahadur receiving Anasthas Mikoyan, the Soviet Deputy PM. Lal Bahadur's puny figure, with his Jawahar jacket unbuttoned, doing *namaskar* with folded hands invited peels of derisive laughter from the audience. I felt sorry for Lal Bahadur for the terrific disadvantage he suffered from in succeeding Nehru because the drop from Nehru to him was so unbridgeably great. This reminded me that soon after Lord Addington succeeded Pitt as the Prime Minister of Great Britain, Castlereagh thundered in parliament, "Pitt is to Addington what London is to Paddington." Lord Addington did not last for long.

Two eventful things happened during Lal Bahadur's brief tenure as PM. The first was the Kutch incident. We lost some territory in the process. The second was the brief war between India and Pakistan. Under international pressure in which the Soviet Union was most actively involved, India agreed to a ceasefire when we had the upper hand.

During the war some scribes of the press extolled Lal Bahadur as "the man of steel," an epithet which caused me much amusement for I knew him over the years as no more than a man of cheese. He did not even know where our forces were deployed on the western front. Fortunately our Chiefs of Staff then, particularly General J. N. Chaudhuri and Air Chief Marshal Arjan Singh, were firstclass men. During that short war Lal Bahadur and his family never slept in their house. Radhakrishnan told me that they slept in a rathole—a sprawling underground cellar from the basement of Rashtrapati Bhawan, dug deep and far into the far-flung vegetable garden and the small woods beyond in Lord Linlithgow's time during the second world war. Radhakrishnan refused to go underground. He told me that he preferred to die with his fellow-men breathing fresh air.

At the Tashkent conference, called by Soviet Prime Minister Alexi Kosygin, Lal Bahadur succumbed to pressure and agreed to everything Kosygin demanded. From Tashkent Lal Bahadur rang up his staff in Delhi to find out the reaction in India. Normally he would have returned to Delhi to a hostile reception. But, like Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed after him, Lal Bahadur knew when to die. Death stills most controversies.

Two nights before Lal Bahadur's death in Tashkent, I had an unusual dream. I saw a dead Lal Bahadur being taken out of a plane at Palam airport. Early next morning I rang up my friend P. K. Panikkar who told me, "Your horoscope is such that the dream will come true." I said, "Damn my horoscope, I wish Carl Jung were accessible to me at this moment."

Vallabhbhai Patel

THIRTEEN YEARS older than Nehru and only seven years younger than Gandhiji, Vallabhbhai Patel came from peasant stock. He possessed considerable organizing ability and an ample measure of ruthlessness. To be the boss of the party machine came naturally to him. That was the type of work Nehru shunned. He also left the field open for Patel to be the Chairman of the Congress Central Parliamentary Board until independence. This gave Patel a hold on the party machine.

I have referred to Vallabhbhai Patel in several other chapters. On 2 September 1946 he joined the interim government in charge of Home Affairs and Information and Broadcasting. From then on till his death on 15 December 1950 he functioned in a way which encouraged senior civil servants to be divided into two camps; in fact government was almost an illegitimate diarchy. Morarji Desai, who was an admirer of Vallabhbhai Patel, once told me, "The Sardar lacks the personal discipline required in a number two."

Power was Nehru's mistress and he did not like Patel to flirt with her; but he put up with it in the interest of a semblance of unity and harmony. Those were not normal times.

Before the formation of the dominion government on 15 August 1947, some interested people set a rumour afloat that Patel would not be included in the Cabinet. Nehru was annoyed. He not only included him in the Cabinet but also designated him as Deputy Prime Minister. The designation Deputy PM was only an honorific without any responsibility attached to it. But in the hands of Patel it was different.

A new Ministry of States was contemplated

Patel and Nehru (late forties).

with the formation of the dominion government. It was Nehru's intention to be in charge of it. In fact he had selected H. V. R. Iengar to be the Secretary of the States Ministry. Lord Mountbatten thought that Nehru would not be overindulgent to his friends—the princes. He believed that Nehru had his head in the clouds and Patel had his feet on the ground. He not only wanted Patel to be the Minister of States but also his own factotum, V. P. Menon, as the Secretary of the Ministry so that he himself could have a finger in the pie. So Mountbatten had a little talk with Patel to prepare him. It was Mountbatten's intention to talk Nehru out of the new ministry. The decision about the new ministry lay with the Prime Minister-designate and not with the Governor-General. But Nehru allowed himself to be talked out of the new ministry.

Patel did not want John Matthai as Finance Minister in the dominion government because he had agreed with Liaqat Ali Khan, and had later persuaded Nehru to agree to set up an Income Tax Investigation Commission. Patel was of the view that Liaqat Ali Khan's real motive was to ruin Hindu businessmen and industrialists. So he managed to persuade Nehru to bring in R. K. Shanmukham Chetty as the first Finance Minister of independent India. Patel knew that Chetty would be pliable and do his bidding. Chetty's appointment, with the Ottawa Pact background, came as a complete surprise to most people. At the appropriate time Patel persuaded Shanmukham Chetty to delete a few names of Gujarati businessmen and industrialists from the list of those who were to be proceeded against on the basis of the findings of the commission. When this became known, there was a furor in parliament and Patel found himself in a tight corner. He kept quiet and let down the man who did his bidding, and did not lose a wink of sleep in the process. Nehru asked for and received Chetty's resignation. He was succeeded by John Matthai as Finance Minister. Patel was then in no position to prevent John Matthai's appointment. Some time later John Matthai was to say about Chetty that he was more sinned against than sinning.

One of John Matthai's sons got into trouble in Allahabad, where he was a student at the university. The boy ran his car over a pedestrian and killed him. He was arrested by the police. John Matthai, in his distress, hopefully rushed to the PM with an appeal to save the boy. I am afraid John Matthai came to the wrong person; Nehru would never interfere with the course of justice. The PM expressed his sympathy. John Matthai was deeply disappointed and hurt. This coloured his subsequent attitude to the PM. Having failed with the PM, John Matthai rushed to Patel who was eager to put him under his personal obligation. Patel rang up Govind Ballabh Pant, UP Chief Minister, and asked him to release the boy at once and send him under police escort to Delhi. The next day the boy was delivered at Patel's house. He rang up John Matthai and asked him to come over. On his arrival, Patel told him, "I have a surprise for you," and had the boy brought to them. He told John Matthai to get the boy out of the country without any loss of time. So the boy was quietly sent abroad for further studies. No more was heard of the case against him. This is one example of Patel's style of administration.

Patel was not wholly free from communalism. He never trusted Maulana Azad whose opponent he remained. To Patel, Rafi Ahmed Kidwai was a detestable enemy. During partition and the mass migrations of people, Patel took delight in making fun of Nehru. He once told a group of Congress MPs that there was only one nationalist Muslim in India. They asked who he was and felt sure that Patel would name Rafi Ahmed Kidwai. To their surprise Patel answered, "Maulana Nehru."

One move of Patel remained an incomprehensible mystery to me. He invited Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar to Delhi and treated him as his house guest when the memory of the man declaring the independence of Travancore and naming a High Commissioner to Pakistan remained fresh in people's minds. Patel seriously recommended to Nehru that Sir CPR might be appointed as the Indian Ambassador to the United States to replace Asaf Ali. Nehru was taken aback and told Patel that he would not touch Sir CPR with a barge-pole. If the proposal was to show magnanimity to a traitor, the least one can say is that it was not only ill-timed but absurd.

While Nehru was away in the United States in 1948, on a goodwill tour, Patel took the opportunity to rush through two constitutional provisions in the Constituent Assembly—one giving constitutional guarantee to the princes about their privy purses and archaic privileges and immunities, and the other giving a constitutional guarantee to the ICS and other "Secretary of State Services" to protect their emoluments, privileges and service conditions. Patel allowed himself to be persuaded too much by civil servants like V. P. Menon and H. M. Patel. Nehru disapproved of these measures but chose to acquiesce in them. Patel had also persuaded the Congress Working Committee, in Nehru's absence, to pass a resolution permitting RSS workers to join the Congress. Nehru was hopping mad about this. The first thing he did on return from the United States was to ask for a meeting of the Congress Working Committee at which the Patel-sponsored resolution on RSS workers joining the Congress was revoked.

Some time early in 1948, U. S. Malliah, MP, had told me about his confrontation with Vallabhbhai Patel before independence while he was Acting President of the Kannada Pradesh Congress Committee. With a list of Congress candidates for the assembly elections, he and his colleagues appeared before the Congress Parliamentary Board in Bombay presided over by Vallabhbhai Patel. Maulana Azad was also there. Malliah said his list was a unanimous one. Patel intervened to say, "I know what your unanimity is," and proceeded to demolish the list by suggesting a number of replacements. Turning to Patel, Malliah said, "I know the Parliamentary Board has the authority to make changes in the list. I withdraw my list. You select your own candidates, camp in the Kannada area and conduct the election campaign." Malliah left the meeting abruptly, followed by all his colleagues. Patel sent a couple of people to persuade Malliah to return to the meeting. Malliah refused and sent one of his colleagues instead. This was the first time that Patel experienced such defiance. Ultimately Malliah's list was approved without any change. Malliah had taken the view that he himself was not a candidate, he had no personal axe to grind, and, therefore, was not prepared to submit to dictation. He told me that the image of Patel as a strong man was a myth and that he was no more than a bully.

During the independence movement Sardar Patel, and Gandhiji to a certain extent, were opposed to Congressmen interfering in Indian states. In fact Patel wanted to befriend the princes. It was in the teeth of Patel's and Gandhiji's opposition that Nehru started the All-India States People's Conference. Movements against despotic rule and for representative governments were started and kept alive in the Indian states. The princes realized that their position was not secure without the support of their people. But for this, the integration of the Indian states would have run into difficulties. When Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar declared the independence of Travancore and named his High Commissioner to Pakistan, he was physically attacked by the people and had to leave the state.

Patel gave V. P. Menon too much of a free hand to settle matters with the princes. This violated healthy norms of administration. Much too large privy purses and privileges were bestowed on the princes, sometimes even without Patel's knowledge. V. P. Menon was very much under the thumb of Mountbatten until his departure from India. Patel was later to confess to U. N. Dhebar that unduly large privy purses were sanctioned without his knowledge by V. P. Menon. Finance Minister John Matthai, who revelled in straining at a gnat, readily swallowed many a camel. No important decision of the States Ministry was placed before the PM or the Cabinet. Hailing Vallabhbhai Patel as the Bismarck of India and the Iron Man was a little too thick.

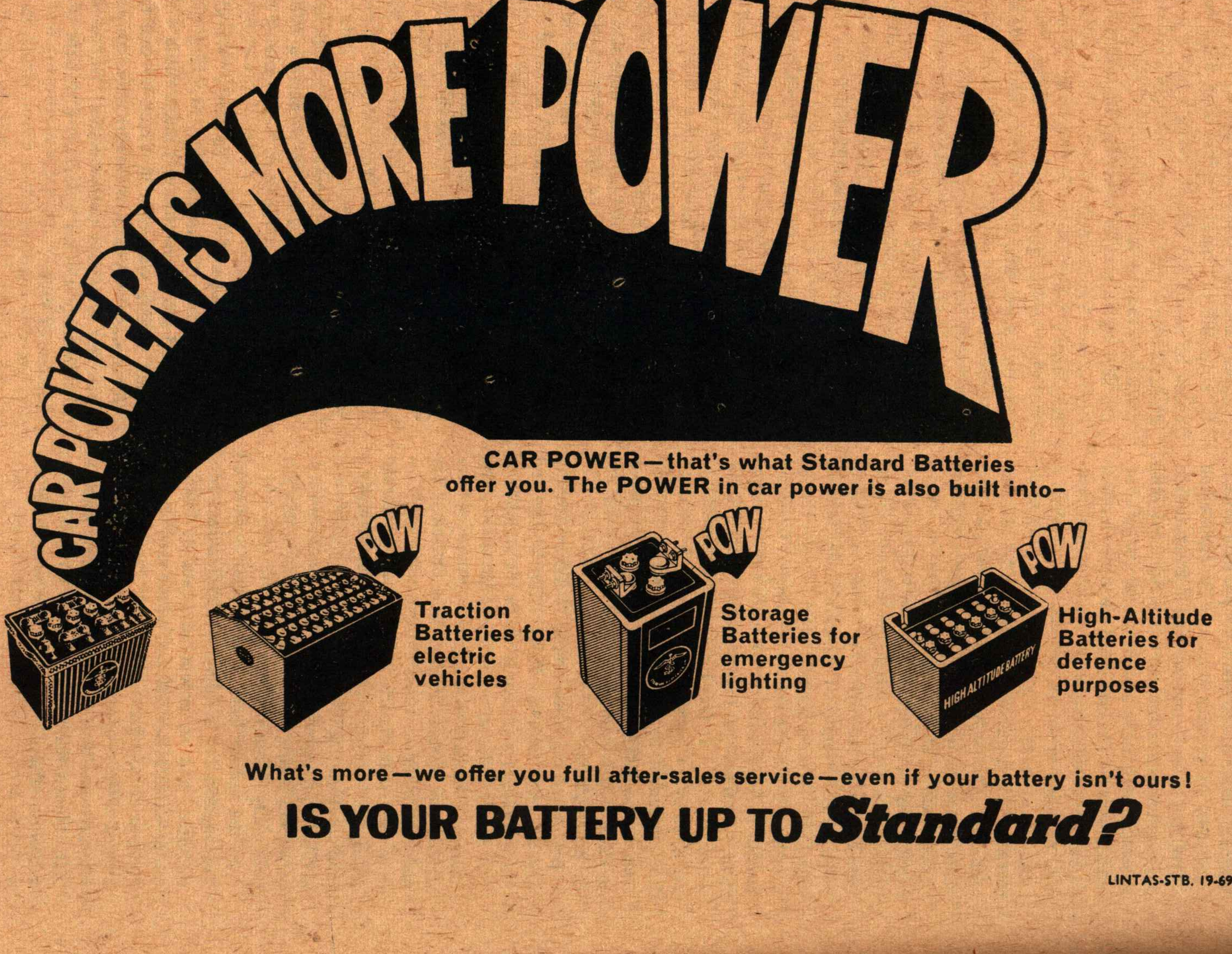
Girja Shankar Bajpai complained to Patel that I exercised too much influence on Nehru and that I was a Socialist. To Patel, words like Socialist and Communist were like red rags before a bull. Until then I was, on the whole, in the good books of Patel even though I attached no importance to it. He once told Rajkumari Amrit Kaur that "among those close to Jawaharlal, Mathai is the only person who does not create trouble between us.'' But the word Socialist put him on his guard. He asked Intelligence Chief Sanjeevi to find out all about my political antecedents and my present contacts. He also asked PTI Chief K. S. Ramachandran in Delhi to find out as much as he could about me. Sanjeevi, who knew me well, came straight to me and told me privately what Patel had asked him to do. He said he was not going to make any inquiries and that, after a couple of weeks, he would send Patel a clean chit about me. I advised Sanjeevi not to do that but to carry out the directions of his minister faithfully. The same day Ramachandran also came to see me not only to warn me but also to comply with Patel's suggestion that he might frighten me by saying that he was making investigations about me. I asked Ramachandran to do me a favour by conveying the following message to Patel that evening at his usual daily meeting with him: ''Who is Sardar Patel? I do not recognize him; but if the man with whom I have the honour to work, asks me to declare my political faith, I shall say that I am not only a Socialist but a Communist.'' In fact I wrote out this message on a piece of paper and handed it over to Ramachandran so that he would make no mistake. Ramachandran dutifully showed the paper to Patel who promptly asked Sanjeevi to call off the investigation.

Before joining government, I did something which slightly annoyed Patel. After he arrested Ram Manohar Lohia in Delhi in the summer of 1947 I visited the latter in jail and gave him some mangoes. At that time I had a soft corner for Lohia, the Sancho Panza, who preached the weird theory of permanent Satyagraha and whom Patel described in parliament as the ''permanent duragrahi.'' Nehru told me that Patel did make a mild complaint against me for visiting Lohia and giving him mangoes. I said, ''I am not in government; but if this sort of thing embarrasses you personally, I shall not repeat it.''

In the second half of 1950 Patel sponsored Purushottamdas Tandon, a traditionalist, obscurantist, and an ardent advocate of ''shudh Hindi'' and ''Hindu culture'' as the candidate for election as Congress President. Nehru disapproved of the proposal, but Patel stood firm. He was annoyed with Nehru for listening more to Rafi Ahmed Kidwai and others than to him in Congress affairs. Nehru did not wish to get entangled in a controversy by sponsoring a rival candidate. But Rafi Ahmed Kidwai, Mridula Sarabhai and some others persuaded Acharya J. B. Kripalani to contest. Nehru kept aloof because he hated the idea of being a partisan or group leader in the Congress. Patel got busy and constantly rang up all the Congress Chief Ministers seeking support for Tandon. The contest was a close one. Tandon polled 1,306 votes as against Kripalani's 1,092 votes—a difference of only 214. Thus Tandon got elected as Congress President on 2 September 1950. If Nehru had made his preference known publicly, Tandon would have been badly defeated in spite of Patel. At the Nasik session of the Congress, Nehru took the offensive. He made some fighting speeches on fundamental questions. Patel came to Nasik but did not attend the session. He stayed quietly in Birla House there. Patel was then not only an ill man but averse to any open conflict with Nehru. All the resolutions sponsored by Tandon and his supporters were voted down by large margins. I have never forgotten two Hindi words uttered by Tandon repeatedly at the session after the voting on each resolution, ''*Samshodan girgaya*.'' Nobody was left in doubt as to who was the leader.

Vallabhbhai Patel died in Bombay on 15 December 1950. Did Patel seriously entertain the idea of ousting Nehru at any time in the post-partition period? My answer is no. Patel never forgot that Nehru was Gandhiji's declared heir. In fact he told several people in private, ''I cannot forget that Jawaharlal is Bapu's chosen man.'' Also Patel fully realized that Nehru, not he, had the mass following. It was this conviction that prompted him, after a great deal of agonizing struggle with himself, to support the Nehru-Liaqat Pact on the East-West Bengal crisis—a pact which he personally abhorred. And he showed exemplary statesmanship as well as basic loyalty by going to Calcutta to make a public speech in support of the pact. Nehru greatly appreciated it.

Nehru resigned from Tandon's Working Committee on 10 August 1951. Maulana Azad followed suit the next day. Tandon made a dignified parting statement in which he said that Nehru was the symbol of the nation and resigned from the Congress presidentship. Nehru was unanimously elected Congress President on 9 September 1951.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Indira

When a hen crows, it heralds the end of an Empire—Chinese Proverb

When a hen crows, it heralds the end of the World—Malayalam Proverb

THE FIRST IMPRESSION Indira made on me thirty-one years ago was that of conceit. About young Disraeli, Queen Victoria said to her Prime Minister Lord Derby, "I have seen some of the notes of the new Chancellor of the Exchequer. He is conceited." Lord Derby made his submission, "Your Majesty, everyone has a right to be conceited until he is successful." With Indira, conceit swelled with success.

It was my practice to keep a spare copy of everything Nehru wrote and also copies of important telegrams and documents. With Nehru's informal permission, I let Indira read all these daily. This helped her to inform her mind and to talk somewhat sensibly to foreign dignitaries who sat on either side of her at social functions. She was extremely good at keeping secrets. I also informally placed at her disposal my personal staff—two of them who were in the same grade as the PM's PAs. This I did because, as the PM's hostess, she had a good deal of work to do. I myself had the use of the PM's PAs.

Indira hated small cars. When Hindustan Motors put their first cars on the road, Nehru asked me to get rid of his "chariot" which was a Buick and buy a Hindustan. I promptly carried out his wishes. It was only when she saw the small Hindustan that she realized that the Buick had gone. She was livid with rage and did not talk to me for a week.

Indira had a constant complaint against her father—that he always kept quiet at mealtimes, when they were alone, and never gave satisfactory answers to her questions. I advised her against raising heavy stuff at mealtimes but to tell him amusing stories and jokes and make him laugh. This she could never do. I also asked her to note down whatever she wanted to ask her father and that arrangements could easily be made for her to see him quietly twice a week. But she started passing on to me her questions saying, "Papu never fails to give you clear-cut answers." Once she said to me, with a lump in her throat and moist eyes, that while she was in England and Europe as a young girl she was kept in want and that on a few occasions she had to starve. This was also an indirect complaint against her father.

One day, when she was surrounded by her two little kids, she looked at me and said, out of the blue, "I shall not hesitate to dash my children against a rock if it is in the interest of the country." I got angry and told her, "You are too full of illusions. As a child your dolls fought against British soldiers and defeated them; as a little girl you were the Commander-in-Chief of the moneky brigade; as a teenage girl you were Joan of Arc; and now you are Lady Macbeth. The interest of the country will be better served if you can catch field rats and dash them against rocks." Then I walked out.

Indira's taste in art bordered on the grotesque. When Jacqueline Kennedy came to stay in Nehru's house, Indira wasted government money by having a wooden carving made to be placed at the fire-place in the bedroom. It was a real horror. How Mrs Kennedy slept in that room without getting nightmares was a wonder. But Indira was very pleased with that horror. Verily Nikita Khruschev uttered the truth when he said "Modern art is the work of a donkey's tail."

It was on the recommendation of Lal Bahadur that Indira was taken into the Congress Working Committee by U. N. Dhebar. Nehru had nothing to do with it. Her election as interim Congress President early in 1959 at Hyderabad was also not on Nehru's initiative. It was Kamaraj's suggestion. Nehru was a silent witness. He neither encouraged it nor discouraged it. On his return from Hyderabad he told me so; but I have no doubt that he was pleased. The next morning I was looking at three photographs—of Motilal Nehru, Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira—placed in

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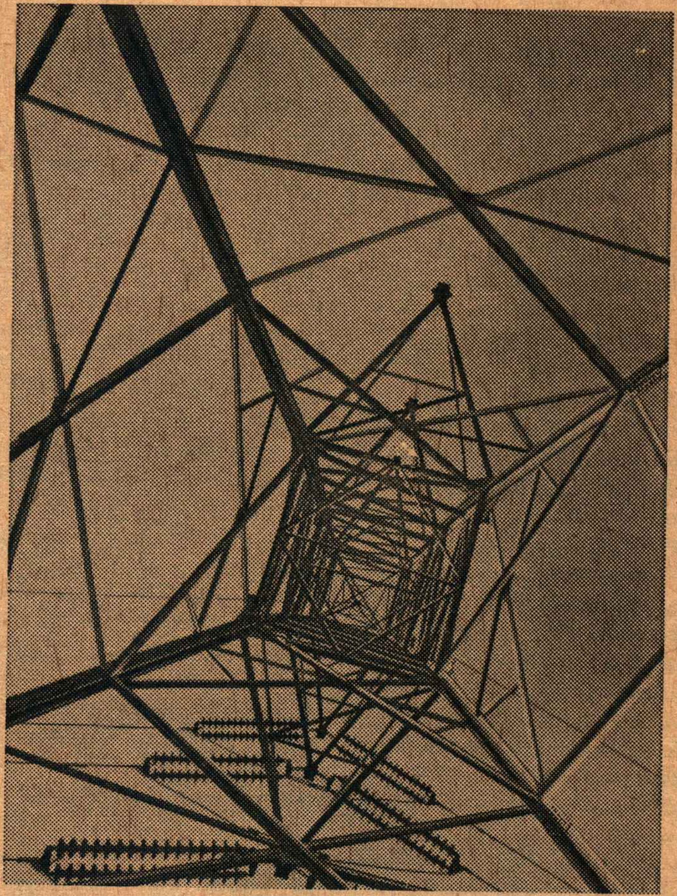
a row in the corridor leading from the PM's study to his bedroom. After breakfast the PM and Indira came as I was looking at the photographs. The PM asked me what I was looking at so attentively. I pointed out the three photographs and said, "Father, Son and Holy Ghost." He laughed and Indira was much amused.

Nehru spoke critically of Indira to me only twice. The first time was when Indira managed to delay for a long time the surrender, to government, of the expensive necklace presented to her by the King of Saudi Arabia. Nehru was annoyed. He told me, "Like most women, Indu has a highly developed sense of possessions." I told him, "It is the result of her having had no security right from childhood. I do not know what the future has in store for her; but insecurity will follow her like a shadow all her life and her actions will largely be governed by it." He listened attentively with a measure of sadness. He loved his daughter dearly. Much later, while Indira was the PM, a question on the necklace, with insinuations, was raised in parliament by Ram Manohar Lohia. It was answered by Morarji Desai who was Finance Minister and Deputy Prime Minister. He said that the necklace was kept by Nehru in his custody in a safe. This was totally incorrect. Nehru never kept a safe. His office in the PM's house had no safe; it had only a small Godrej cashbox in which a necklace could not be accommodated. There was only one safe in the PM's house. It was a Chub safe which I had put in Indira's spare bathroom long before, at her request, to keep her jewellery and such other valuables as she possessed. Both the keys of the safe were with her.

The second time that Nehru showed annoyance towards his daughter was after Indira made an unwise statement in Hong Kong, on her way to Tokyo, to fly over the North Pole to the United States on a paid lecture tour for which she had collected many ghost-written speeches. If I remember correctly it was in 1963. Nehru was not well then, and yet she went. Soon after she left, Nehru's condition worsened. I had to go to the PM's house to take charge of the situation. I rang up Dr B. C. Roy who came the next day. He organized the course of treatment with the help of government doctors in New Delhi. Once, while the PM and I were alone in his room during that period, he told me with a measure of irritation, about Indira's statement in Hong Kong that her father had asked her to join his Cabinet as Minister for External Affairs. He added that he did not make any such offer, but a vague thought did occur to him in view of his indisposition and he did some loud thinking in her presence for a fleeting moment. He further said that, on mature consideration, he was unlikely to take her into his Cabinet.

On Nehru's death Indira flagrantly flouted the wishes expressed in his will that he did not want any religious ceremonies after his death.

It can be said, without fear of any contradiction, that the Congress Parliamentary Party voted for Indira to succeed Lal Bahadur mainly for one reason—that she happened to be Nehru's daughter. It was indeed a tribute to Nehru. A day before the voting, a minister visited me and said that he had advised Morarji Desai not to contest and to give way to youth. He added, "You know her better than any person; what is your advice?" I replied, "Go and vote according to your assessment or conscience and see me afterwards." Straight from the Central Hall of parliament, immediately after the voting, the minister came to me and asked, "What is your opinion?" I said I had no doubt that she would be elected because Nehru's image loomed large in the background." He asked, "What is your assessment of her, what sort of a PM will she be?" I said, "She will ruin this country. How long she will take to achieve this, I do not know. There is nothing of the father in her except the noncommunal outlook. She will play a different type of politics—the politics of manoeuvre, manipulation and deception. She will have no loyalty to anyone except to herself. Not being overburdened with scruples, she can do almost anything. She will administer unpleasant surprises to Kamaraj and others who supported her. And, what is worse, there is an element of crankiness in her nature. She will surpass Gladstone in axing people. Perhaps your turn will come soon. She will swear by socialism, in which she does not personally believe and the meaning of which she does not understand. When you find her swearing by socialism, remember a saying of Samuel Johnson's, "When a butcher says his heart bleeds for his country, rest assured that he is swearing by a sinecure." In any serious crisis in which her personal interests are gravely threatened, she will not have the capacity to take a bold decision by herself. She will fall into the hands of others; if they are not honest and fearless people, then she has had it. It is enough for the present." He was flabbergasted and said that he would write down all I had said and keep it for future reference.



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Indira's tenure as PM was marked by some very unhealthy trends: (i) Her absurd advocacy of committed civil servants, committed judiciary, and committed press; (ii) the sickeningly vulgar solidarity rallies artificially arranged in Delhi on the slightest provocation at public expense by Delhi state and the adjoining states of Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and UP. A tribe of paid rallymen were as readily available as instant coffee, and public transport was always there; (iii) reducing the Council of Ministers to a bunch of nonentities; (iv) befriending and making use of the Communist Party of India and ex-Communists while she was shaky and discarding them when she felt politically safe; (v) making ghost-writers out of all except chaprasis.

The classic example of a committed civil servant was P. N. Haksar, who had some experience only in the Foreign Service in rather minor positions, and who did not possess a modicum of discipline and detachment so essential in a civil servant. He was allowed to play party politics for which he was singularly unfit.

Even after a lapse of time I cannot understand how Cabinet Ministers and prominent functionaries, with considerable experience in public life, reduced themselves to jesters, buffoons, sycophants and abject flatterers. One made an ass of himself by saying, "Indira is India, and India is Indira," and felt satisfied with his profundity, while two so-called political heavyweights sat on either side and applauded. The same joker hailed Sanjay as Shankaracharya and Vivekananda! Another made a monkey of himself by saying, "What happens to Indira, happens to India; and what happens to India, happens to Indira"—profound secondary school stuff! And the opposition Jana Sangh leader, Atal Behari Vajpayee, was swept off his feet at the fall of Bangladesh and blurted out, "She is Durga!" The campaign in Bangladesh was a very ordinary military operation, and it needed no Durga or Bhadra Kali. No Prime Minister had any option but to act the way she did in Bangladesh. I do hope, as External Affairs Minister, Vajpayee will not allow himself to become so easily unbalanced. UP Chief Minister Tiwari committed blasphemy by hailing Sanjay as Lord Krishna!

After the Allahabad judgment, S. Mulgaokar and B. G. Verghese wrote powerful editorials in their respective newspaper under the identical title "Time to Go." Tables were turned on them and they were made to realize that it was their time to go. So much for the freedom of the press!

To David Frost, the journalist and broadcaster, Indira said recently, "I felt utter, utter relief when ousted from power. . . . When I got the news of my personal defeat, I had a surge of relief as if a tremendous rock had been lifted from my shoulders." I don't think she herself believes in the statement she made to Frost. She could have had the "utter, utter relief" by casting off the "tremendous rock" herself, when the Allahabad High Court judgment came, by resigning; thereby she would not only have salvaged herself but enhanced her personal image. I believe it was the gravest mistake she committed; all the rest flowed from it; unscrupulous, crude and small men and an immature boy took charge of her and from then on she was no more than a miserable automaton piling folly upon folly and strewing faggots around her.

Vision, imagination, boldness, efficiency are the essential qualities which a worthwhile minister possesses; but above all is the capacity to resign. If the members of the Union Council of Ministers showed courage and resigned on the question of declaring Emergency without Cabinet approval, as laid down in the Constitution, Emergency would have ended within a few days. These men failed at the moment of the nation's supreme crisis. They and the vociferous supporters of the Emergency in the Congress Parliamentary Party are a bunch of cowards who have forfeited their right to hold public positions. Until they disappear, there is no hope for the Congress which has a glorious record spread over almost a century. Like the fabulous Phoenix, the Congress should burn itself so that a new generation can rise rejuvenated from its ashes and give the country a new leadership and new hope.

The day after Emergency was declared on 25 June 1975, my minister friend rang up and started talking. I said, "I don't talk about serious matters over the telephone, and hung up. He came to see me later in the day with his diary and read out what I had told him about ten years ago. He said "She has ruined the country all right." I replied, "This is only the beginning; she is on the high road to ruining her party and herself beyond repair. She will not last long. What I am worried about is what forces will emerge in place of the Congress."

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Morarji Desai

LONG YEARS AGO, on a Sunday, I happened to be at Qutab Minar with a friend. He asked me about Morarji Desai. I pointed out to him the iron pillar nearby and said, "You put a Gandhi cap on top of that pillar, and you have Morarji Desai—a man straight in body and mind." Nehru once told me that the two straightest men he had come across in India were Purushottamdas Tandon and Morarji Desai.

I developed great personal regard for Morarji for his courageous stand in giving protection to Muslims in the undivided Bombay state during the dark days of partition. He was then Home Minister of the state and his chief, that good man, B. G. Kher, had given him a free hand. Morarji performed his difficult task with great personal conviction and exemplary competence. No other Congress leader functioning in the states, including G. B. Pant, was a patch on Morarji in this matter. This regard for him has persisted in me ever since. Nehru was greatly impressed by Morarji's performance.

When the news of Morarji's defeat in the assembly constituency during the first general elections in 1951-52 reached him, Nehru considered it a freak occurrence and at once stated publicly, "He is the victorious leader of a victorious party." Morarji succeeded B. G. Kher as Chief Minister of Bombay and later won a by-election.

Nehru brought Morarji to Delhi and he became a Union Cabinet Minister on 14 November 1956. Pantji was already the Home Minister in the Union Government. Within a few days of Morarji's entry into the Union Cabinet, U. S. Malliah, MP, who was Deputy Chief Whip of the Congress Party in parliament, came to see me and said that Morarji Desai would like to be listed as number three in the Cabinet, immediately after Pantji. I mentioned this to the PM who hesitated for a moment, but when I quoted the example of Pantji, he agreed and I informed the Cabinet Secretary accordingly.

While he was Finance Minister, Morarji once told me that he was perturbed at the talk of abolishing the status of Bombay as a Union Territory and merging it with Maharashtra, and added that if it was done, he would resign from government and retire from public life. I smiled in disbelief and told him that he would not resign and the question of his retiring from public life would not arise. As most politicians, Morarji is not completely free from eating his words to add to his frugal diet.

Morarji has all the fads of Gandhiji, minus his greatness, plus ample obstinacy and no compassion.

In 1953, when I arrived in Bombay with the PM from London, I told Morarji that B. G. Kher was serving sherry and light wines to foreign guests at the High Commissioner's residence and that he had told me that in the unlikely event of his returning as Chief Minister in Bombay, he would substantially modify the prohibition policy. Morarji was surprised and annoyed and said that he would be writing to Kher.

The legendary Motilal Nehru gave up alcoholic drinks as part of Congress discipline. Later, when he fell ill, his doctors, including B. C. Roy, advised him to take drinks in moderate quantities. The old man refused. Roy then spoke to Gandhiji. The great man immediately advised Motilal Nehru to give up the abstinence. I doubt very much if Morarji would have been so flexible.

During the visit of British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan to Delhi, British High Commissioner Malcolm MacDonald gave a small dinner party at his residence. The chief guest was Nehru. Morarji was one of the invitees. I was also invited. I normally avoided diplomatic functions; but since I personally liked Malcolm MacDonald I decided to attend. At the party I discovered that everyone was holding a glass of fruit juice. I was told that Morarji had laid down the law that no alcoholic drinks should be served if he was to be present. I cannot think of anything more impertinent than this, especially because Morarji was not the chief guest and, according to international law, embassies and High Commis-

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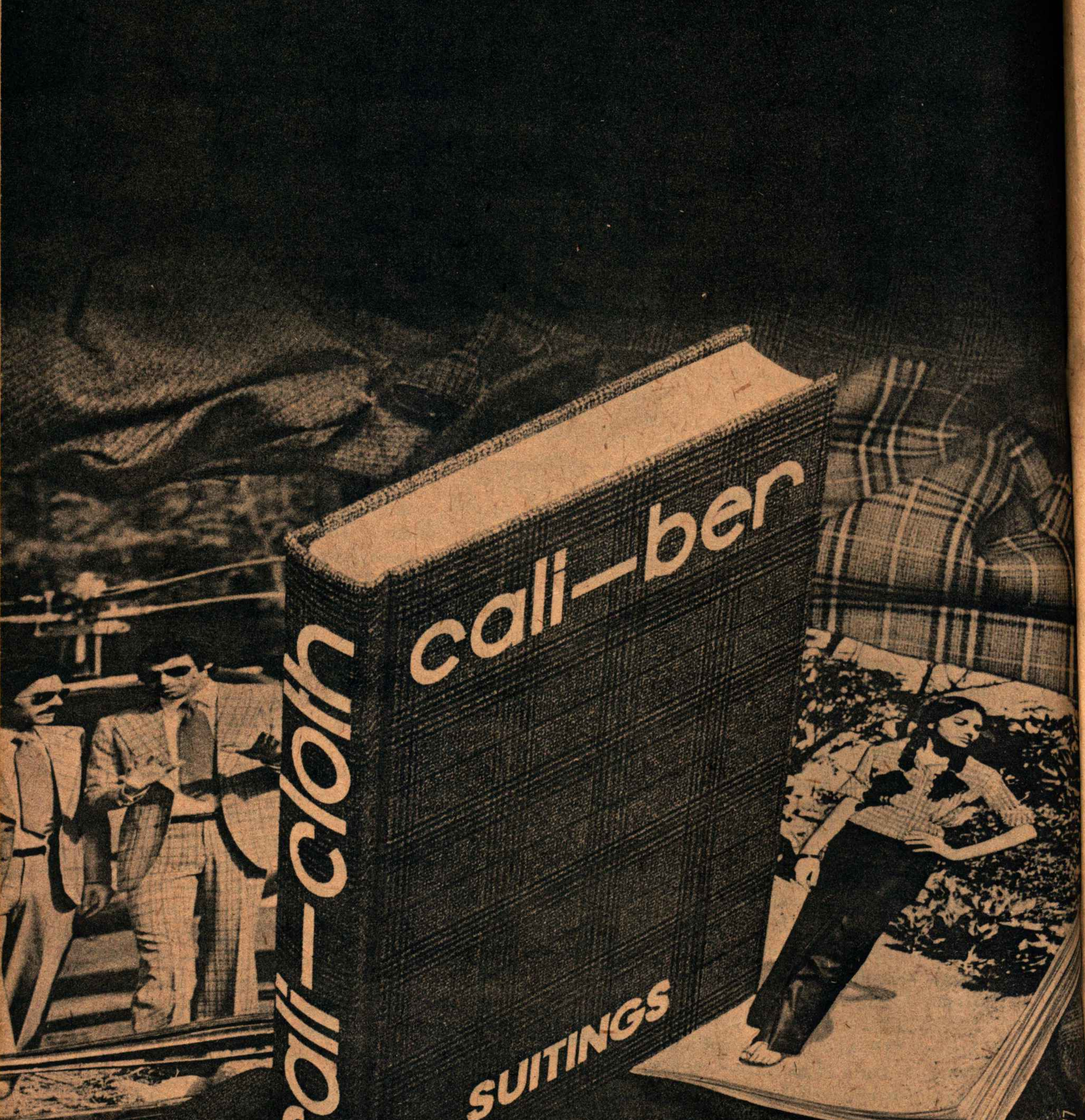
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sions are not Indian territory. The British greatly resented Morarji's condition, and they all had stiff drinks in the adjoining room before the dinner which was purposely fixed somewhat late.

Two incidents in parliament made Nehru doubt Morarji's capacity to keep people together by showing some flexibility. One was in connection with the Gold Control Bill. There was a demand in Lok Sabha to invite the Attorney-General to the House to give an opinion on the legality of the measure. Morarji popped up and said that even if the whole House asked for it, he would not agree. Nehru had to overrule him; and the Attorney-General did appear in the House. The other incident was in the Rajya Sabha where Morarji mentioned Gandhiji's name in support of some measure. Rajkumari Amrit Kaur, who knew Gandhiji better than Morarji, stood up and said that if Gandhi were alive he would have disapproved of Morarji's measure. Morarji retorted in intemperate language and called the Rajkumari a Miss Mayo. Nehru was annoyed.

After Pantji's death Morarji was the obvious person to succeed him as Deputy Leader of the Congress Party in parliament. I was then not with Nehru officially. Nehru found that there was considerable opposition to Morarji among Congress MPs. A section of the party wanted to put up Jagjivan Ram to contest. Sensing the mood of the party, Nehru suggested changing of the Constitution of the Congress Party in parliament to have two Deputy Leaders, who were not ministers, to be elected—one each from both Houses.

During the Chinese invasion Nehru's mind was poisoned by some, chiefly Indira, against Morarji who was wrongly accused of intriguing against Nehru. Morarji is a man who would never stoop so low. He is courageous enough to come out into the open. I know for a fact that before the split in the Congress, when Indira's position was shaky, one politically important minister in Indira's Cabinet went to Morarji and offered his wholehearted help in ousting her. He told Morarji that it was of the utmost importance and urgency to get rid of Indira and went to the extent of saying that Morarji need not even take him into his Cabinet. Morarji was then the Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister. Morarji replied that so long as he was a member of Indira's Cabinet loyalty demanded that he should not lift a finger against her. He added that he could oppose her only after resigning from her Cabinet and that too openly. Morarji expressed his readiness to follow the latter course at the appropriate time. That Cabinet Minister continues to be a "bigwig" in what is left of the Congress today.

Recently, Morarji said, with a measure of satisfaction, that when Bulganin and Khrushchev visited Bombay, he had issued liquor permits to them but that they did not use them and did not drink while in Bombay; further, he stated that they wished they could introduce prohibition in the Soviet Union. I never thought that Morarji could be so naive. Bulganin and Khrushchev did not, of course, go to the Matunga liquor shop with the permits. They must have thrown them away. Khrushchev was a heavy drinker. The Soviet party had brought with them vast quantities of Vodka as well as brandy, wines and champagne. These were carried wherever they went, including Bombay, and they drank everywhere, including Bombay. They also imbibed coconut juice, while in the south, one morning, for a change!

Morarji has considerable respect for vegetarians. One of the great qualities he discovered in Rukmini Arundale, whom he whimsically sponsored as a candidate for the office of President of India, is that she is a vegetarian. Actually neither she nor Morarji is a vegetarian. There is no such thing as vegetarianism. Milk, butter, ghee and curd are not vegetables; they are animal products. The late K. M. Munshi once told me that an unfertilized egg was a vegetable. His theory was that vegetarianism meant not taking life. I asked him if he had ever talked to Sir Jagadish Chandra Bose or to his collaborator Dr Boshi Sen about life and feelings in trees, plants, vegetables, fruits and nuts. He admitted his ignorance. I hope Morarji, in his relentless and heroic determination to be the perfect Adam, will not give up milk, butter, ghee, curd, vegetables, fruits and nuts. Otherwise, he will have to live on bolts!

I suppose Morarji knows that Lord Buddha, the divinely Compassionate One, was a non-vegetarian and he died of indigestion after eating putrid pork put in his begging bowl by a well-meaning man.

Several times in the past Morarji and I have discussed prohibition. I once asked him how he became a fanatical prohibitionist. Had there been any incident in his life which turned him that way? He said that there had been a case of a young man, in his home town, who forced his sister to have sex with him when he was drunk. I

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told him that the youthful Emperor Nero had sex with his beautiful, young and voluptuous mother Agripina when neither was drunk.

Now Morarji wants to impose total prohibition on the people of India within a minimum period of four years. He has asked the Chief Ministers to enact laws within a year. He does not give a thought to the sum of Rs 4,500 million (which was the excise revenue from the sale of all types of alcoholic drinks in 1976-77) or more per year because it is "tainted" money. Neither does he give a thought to the enormous amount of untainted money which will be needed for country-wide enforcement of prohibition. Nor is he much concerned about the fate of the 500,000 people who are directly or indirectly dependent on the industry and the trade in alcoholic drinks for employment. I have wondered why Morarji does not consider the enormous excise revenue from cigarettes and other forms of tobacco as tainted money. Morarji will remain blind to the widespread abuses and the total moral degradation which total prohibition will bring, as he did in Bombay. Morarji has quoted the Constitution. Our lengthy written Constitution contains many irrelevant things. It narrowly escaped being further cluttered with a provision for "monkey-worship."

I wonder if Morarji has considered, among other things: (*i*) the possible reactions among the members of the defence services who are officially entitled to draw their liquor rations (mostly rum) even in a dry state. Does he want to torment the Jawans who stand sentinel in bleak and inhospitable regions of bitter cold in the Himalayas? Does Morarji know that into the battle of Berlin Marshal Zhukov threw his armies after making the men fully drunk with only four words on their lips, "Death to the Germans"? No army will fight fierce battles on coconut juice; (*ii*) foreign diplomatic and consular missions in India will remain as islands where prohibition cannot be enforced; (*iii*) certain tribal and coastal regions where the people are traditionally addicted to local brews as a part of their culture.

Morarji said recently that drinking is against our ancient culture. He has perhaps forgotten that *Soma* was a powerful drink of our ancients.

Morarji does not drink, does not smoke, does not eat meat, does not eat eggs, does not eat fish, does not take coffee, does not take tea, and stopped sex when he was twenty-seven—a formidable array of virtues this! His only positive attachment is politics which, in essence, is the pursuit of power. Had he eschewed politics also and gone for *vanaprastha* (jungle exile) in accordance with "our ancient culture," he would have had some chance of being hailed as a saint.

Jesus Christ drank wine, ate meat and fish, and even converted water into wine at the marriage at Cana for other people. And he said, "That which goeth in defileth not a man, but that which cometh out—covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, pride." Atrocious things these!

No Prime Minister has a right to be a Don Quixote. Total prohibition will be a total failure leading to total degradation. No politician should thrust on administrators any policy which is not administratively feasible. Let him campaign for temperance in which I shall gladly join him.

Morarji will do well to read the following lines which were addressed to statesmen by Liddell Hart in his book *Deterrent or Defence:*

> Keep strong if possible. In any case keep cool. Have unlimited patience. Never corner an opponent, and always assist him to save his face. Put yourself in his shoes so as to see things through his eyes. *Avoid self-righteousness like the devil—nothing is so self-blinding.*

I would like to request Morarji to read Norwegian playwright Henrick Johan Ibsen's great dramatic poem "Brand" written in 1866. Brand is a priest and an idealist with fierce earnestness and determination to do nothing wrong. He declares himself the champion not of things as they are, not of things as they can be made, but of things as they ought to be. Things as they ought to be mean for him things as ordered by men who conformed to his ideal of the perfect Adam who, again, is not man as he is or can be, but man conformed to all the ideals—man, as it is his duty to be. In insisting on this conformity, Brand spares neither himself nor anyone else. Life is nothing; the perfect Adam is everything. Brand, aspiring from height to height of devotion to his ideal, plunges from depth to depth of inhuman follies.

It is in "Brand" that Ibsen, one of the world's greatest dramatists of all time, definitely takes the field against idealism and, like another Luther, nails his thesis to the door of the Temple of Morality.

Epilogue

A great man is one who has not lost the child's heart—Mencius, the great Chinese philosopher and principal disciple of Confucius—372-379 B.C.

I HAVE COME to the end of my labours for the present. I shall write more about Nehru in a companion volume to this book. If, for any reason, I am not in a position to do so, I would like to record here my feelings towards him. While he was alive, they were "more than yesterday, less than tomorrow." With the passage of time and in the perspective of history, my admiration and affection for him have grown. From 1946 I have known him in all his moods better than any other person. It is said that no man is a hero to his valet. But to me he is and will be long as I am alive. No man in all recorded history was loved so much by so many for so long.

As in the case of Gandhiji, Nehru's finest hour was the partition and post-partition days. The secular character of the nation he had dreamt of was in dire peril. Alone in government, undeterred by the ridicule of some of his principal colleagues, Nehru waged a heroic battle against religious fanaticism and mob hysteria. Even Abraham Lincoln was at one time prepared to compromise on the question of slavery. But Nehru stood as firm as a rock for something basic he believed in. He risked his political future and his life by going against the current. With the sublime support of Gandhiji from outside, Nehru ultimately triumphed. A lesser person would have crumbled. It was Nehru's vision, courage, faith and his vast personal prestige which sustained him in those dark days. Seeing him use his fists against some hysterical refugees looting a Muslim shop in the Connaught Circus area reminded me of the righteous indignation of Christ in the temple.

On the Madras beach on 9 October 1952, Nehru made a speech in which he wrote his own epitaph: "If any people choose to think of me, I would like them to say that this man, with all his mind and heart loved India and the Indian people, and they were indulgent to him and gave him of their love most abundantly and extravagantly." The people of India will think of him as he said, despite the pitiful attempt of some puny ministers of the Janata Party to denigrate him. These little men will "strut and fret their hour upon the stage" and then be heard no more. But Nehru, with a heart as large as the universe and full of compassion, will be remembered as long as India lasts, as the liberator of his people, the founder of the republic, and the builder of the nation.

One of the quotations which Nehru liked most and knew by heart was from the book *How the Steel was Tempered* by the incomparable Ostrovsky:

> Man's dearest possession is life, and since it is given to him to live but once, he must so live as not to be seared with the shame of a cowardly and trivial past, so live as not to be tortured for years without purpose that dying he can say: 'All my life and my strength were given to the first cause in the world—the liberation of mankind'.

I have a hunch that this quotation came to his mind in the morning of his day of death as a pleasant source of comfort. That is perhaps why he looked so serene, as the Buddha, after his death.

Truely, it can be said of this great and good man that "his life was a great epic written by the hand of Fate."

THE END

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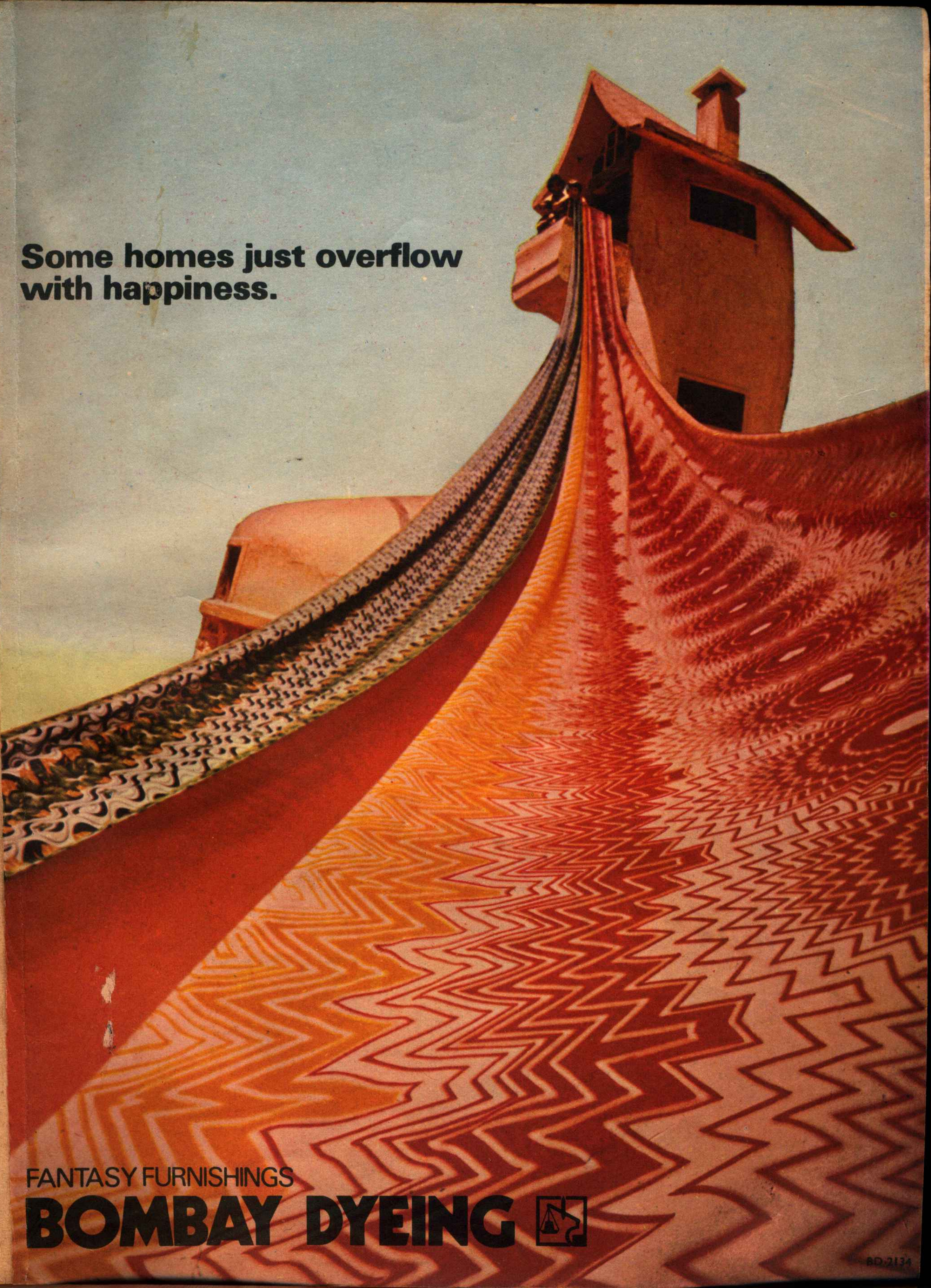
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